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This book provides a blueprint to help both practicing and aspiring administrators conduct a successful job search. Eight chapters present specific strategies for the following: preparing a winning profile; locating and selecting potential positions; writing an effective job application; getting the job interview; negotiating the employment conditions; preparing for the next administrative position; developing an entry plan; and choosing career options outside school administration. The book includes letters of application, examples of vitae, and a sample superintendent's employment contract. Appendices contain a job search model and reflective job-search exercises. An annotated bibliography is included. (LMI)

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Designing Your Own Career

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A Job-Hunting Guide for Administrators (and Would-Be Administrators)

Jerry J. Herman

EA 026 368

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Designing Your Own Career

To Ted "The Bear" Wodzinski,
outstanding school superintendent
and great friend

Designing Your Own Career

A Job-Hunting Guide for Administrators (and Would-Be Administrators)

Jerry J. Herman

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Preface

I know I can do a better job than my principal.

—a teacher

My supervisor is a dud; I sure could do a lot better job than he.

—a principal

My superintendent is a really nice person, but she is so outdated in her knowledge and skills; and I'm certain that I could be a much better superintendent.

—a central office administrator

I guess you have to be an administrator before you can get your first administrative position, and this appears to be an impossible hurdle to me.

—an aspiring administrator

I don't know what you have to do to advance in this field of educational administration.

—a current administrator

These phrases are uttered a thousand times each year by aspiring administrators and current administrators who are having a difficult time advancing in their field. Although it is true that sometimes it is difficult to break into administration or obtain quick advancements in administrative positions, there are numerous positive things you can do to obtain the administrative positions you desire.

Designing Your Own Career cannot deal with situations where appointments are politically made, or when job vacancies are advertised merely to give the impression of an open job search, or when professional headhunters continue to recommend only those individuals they consider to be in their *stable* of candidates. This book, however, can provide you with an expert blueprint to greatly assist you in obtaining the job you desire. It can teach you how to avoid the political, the false, and the stable-controlled jobs while assisting you in locating those positions that are truly available job opportunities for you.

In addition to providing many helpful suggestions, this book also provides a great deal of example materials (although, to protect confidentiality, the actual names of individuals and schools are not used). It also provides exercises that will assist the reader in simulating real life situations. Finally, a very helpful chapter is added for those administrators who, for one reason or another, want to change occupations.

The book is divided into eight chapters, and it ends with a section of annotated Suggested Readings. It also provides letters of application, examples of vitae, and a sample superintendent's employment contract.

The chapters contain the following themes:

Chapter 1 discusses the preparation necessary to present a winning profile to prospective employers.

Chapter 2 discusses a series of homework hints to assist you in locating the job you desire.

Chapter 3 presents a series of true-and-tried suggestions to make your job application a successful one.

Chapter 4 provides a series of proven methods that will prepare you to be a winner during your job interview.

Chapter 5 presents guidelines that will be useful to you when you negotiate your employment conditions.

Chapter 6 stresses the points that are necessary to prepare you for your next administrative position.

Chapter 7 provides a wealth of information about alternative jobs for those administrators who, for valid reasons, wish to change occupations.

Chapter 8 discusses choices the educational administrator has as she or he leaves K-12 educational administration.

In addition, two appendixes designed to assist the reader are included:

Appendix A: Job Search Model (graphic model of the steps involved in a successful administrative job search)

Appendix B: Reflective Job Search Exercise Worksheets

Collectively, the eight chapters, the exhibits, and the annotated Suggested Readings present you with a wellspring of proven ideas to assist you in locating and obtaining the administrative positions you desire. It is the type of guide that you can put to immediate use, and it is one that should be retrieved from storage and reread every time you are thinking about obtaining another administrative position.

Numerous examples are provided throughout the text, and many exercises are included to allow you to practice the various activities required to obtain the position you desire. By completing all of the exercises that are included, you can simulate the various important stages of preparing yourself to obtain the administrative position of your choice.

The guide will go a long way to assist you in becoming a winner and remaining one throughout your administrative career. It is written specifically for you by an experienced hand who has 35 years of administrative experience through all levels of educational administration, ranging from the position of principal to central office administrator, to assistant superintendent, to a 20-year stint as a superintendent of schools.

About the Author

Jerry J. Herman is currently Professor of Administration and Planning in the College of Education at the University of Alabama. During his career, he has distinguished himself in numerous public school administrative posts, as a university administrator, as a prolific author on administrative matters, and as a consultant to public school districts, educational associations, educational foundations, universities, and businesses.

His public school experience includes teaching at the elementary, junior high, senior high, junior college, and university graduate levels. He also has served as a principal, an elementary curriculum director, a secondary curriculum director, a director of district-level research, an assistant superintendent of instruction, and a superintendent of schools for approximately a 20-year period.

He has written widely on management and education, including over 150 articles and 16 books on administrative and management topics. Among the numerous honors he has received are employer of the year, one of the 100 best administrators in North America, *Who's Who in Education*, *Who's Who in Educational Administration*, and Honored Alumnus from his undergraduate university.

He is a serious student and researcher in the field of educational administration. Most important, he writes about matters that he has put into practice during his various personal, administrative, and consulting experiences.

1

Preparing Your Winning Profile

Work is Love made visible,
And if you can't work with love but only with distaste,
It is better that you should leave your work
and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of the people
who work with joy.

—Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*

If one is considering a job as an educational administrator, she or he had best make certain that it will be the kind of position that will present challenge and happiness. As Kahlil Gibran says, the work, itself, should bring joy to the worker.

To enhance the probability that the administrative position that you seek will bring you challenge, happiness, and joy, you must prepare yourself well before you begin your job search. Chapter 1 will assist you in the initial stages of this administrative job search process.

Chapter 1 discusses the following topics: (a) analyzing your strengths, (b) developing your credentials, (c) soliciting favorable references, (d) developing your vita, (e) reviewing example vitae, and (f) successful hints. The chapter ends with a series of exercises to be completed by the reader.

ANALYZING YOUR STRENGTHS

The initial act to be carried out when preparing yourself for a job hunt for a position in educational administration is that of analyzing your strengths as they relate to a position in educational administration.

The best way to begin is to list the knowledge, experiences, and skills that you feel will assist you in attaining the administrative position or the range of administrative positions you desire. Let's take a look at three examples: (a) a teacher who is looking for a first administrative position as an assistant principal or as a principal, (b) a principal who is looking for a position as a school district's director of curriculum or as an assistant superintendent for instruction, and (c) a central office administrator who is looking for her or his first superintendency.

Example 1: Looking for an Assistant Principalship or a Principalship at the Elementary Level

Knowledge:

1. I have had 10 years of experience working with students at the elementary school level, and I've taught both early elementary and later elementary grades.
2. I'm aware of child growth and development stages, having two children of my own.
3. I am knowledgeable about technology, and I use it in my classes to supplement the other instructional delivery methods.
4. I have developed innovative curriculum materials to be used by students in a cooperative learning environment.
5. I understand and use the whole language approach in my instructional methods.

Training and Professional Activities:

1. I have a B.S. degree in elementary education.
2. I have an M.A. degree in elementary counseling.
3. I possess an Ed.S. degree in elementary administration.
4. For the past 6 years, I have been on the program committee for the national Elementary Principals' Association on Curriculum.
5. For 10 years, I have been a member of our state's Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Experiences:

1. I have twice served as the chair of the school district's elementary curriculum committee.
2. I have taken Madeline Hunter's training in teacher supervision.
3. I have served as the summer school elementary principal for the school district for the past 4 years.
4. While in college, I served as a summer camp counselor each summer.
5. During my college years, I worked for a fast food restaurant, and I was promoted to assistant manager. In this position, I was responsible for accounting functions, inventory control, and purchasing.
6. I am a member of my school's School-Based Management Committee.

Skills:

1. I possess the following technical skills: (a) data collection and analysis, (b) technological usage, (c) budgeting, (d) employee evaluation, and (e) curriculum development.
2. I possess the following people skills: (a) instructing others, (b) listening to others, (c) speaking clearly, (d) communicating understandably through writing, (e) helping others, (f) persuading others, (g) supervising others, (h) working collaboratively with others, (i) mediating disagreements between or among others, (j) negotiating solutions to people problems when differences of opinions exist, (k) mentoring others, (l) consulting with others before making decisions that affect them, (m) coaching others, and (n) building a team identity and spirit.

Example 2: Looking for a Director of Curriculum or an Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Position

Knowledge:

1. I am knowledgeable about the techniques of curriculum auditing, that is, methods of determining what is planned to be taught—is, in reality, being taught—and what is being tested or measured.
2. I am knowledgeable about the methods of developing curriculum guides.

3. I am knowledgeable about the specific teacher training needs required to implement new curricula or to use new instructional delivery techniques.

4. I am knowledgeable about technology and about its potential usages in instructional delivery.

Training and Professional Activities:

1. I have an undergraduate degree in teacher education, and I possess certification as both an elementary and a secondary teacher.

2. I have a master's degree in administration.

3. I have an educational specialist's degree in administration.

4. I have a doctorate in curriculum and instruction.

5. I have attended four week-long workshops on curriculum development, curriculum mapping, instructional delivery methods, and instructional accountability methods. These workshops are repeated and updated on a yearly basis.

6. I have served as the president of our state's Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Experiences:

1. I have experience as both an elementary and a secondary teacher.

2. I have experience as both an elementary and a secondary principal.

3. I have worked in the summers as a school district's teacher trainer on curriculum and instructional delivery matters.

4. I have served on numerous districtwide curriculum committees.

Skills:

1. I possess the following technical skills: (a) I can collect meaningful data, and I can use the computer to analyze student test scores by disaggregating the data to ensure that no student or trend line is overlooked; (b) I can develop a comprehensive curricula and training needs assessment; (c) I can develop a technical educational delivery system; (d) I can develop a comprehensive training and staff development program; and (e) I can manage and supervise a wide variety of curricular and staff development programs.

2. I possess the following people skills: (a) I am an excellent communicator in the speaking, listening, and writing dimensions;

(b) I can get people to work together collaboratively, as I prefer to use my staff skills rather than my line skills; (c) I can successfully resolve conflicts among individuals and groups; (d) I can negotiate visions, missions, and goals with large groups of individuals; (e) I can provide assistance in initiating, developing, and maintaining effective curricular or staff development programs; (f) I can lead, follow, and be a team member—depending on what the situation requires—and (g) I can convince people to volunteer to work on curricular development projects and to participate in staff development activities. I have done this at the building level throughout my years as a principal.

Example 3: A Central Office Administrator Looking for Her or His First Superintendency

Knowledge:

1. I am technologically literate, and I understand how technology can be used to enhance the business, instructional, and personal processes of a school district.
2. I am knowledgeable in the field of finance, and I know how to develop, monitor, and evaluate budgets.
3. I know how to involve the community in meaningful planning and decision making related to strategic planning.
4. I know how to involve employees in meaningful tactical and operational planning.
5. I have knowledge of the personnel functions necessary to operate an effective school district.
6. I have knowledge about the variety of planning and monitoring activities that must take place to ensure instructional accountability at the student level.

Training and Professional Activities:

1. I have training as a secondary school teacher, and I possess a B.A. degree in this area.
2. I possess an M.A. degree in curriculum and instruction.
3. I possess an M.B.A. degree in the area of business and finance.
4. I have a Ph.D. degree in educational administration.
5. I am a member of the Association of School Business Officials-International, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum

Development, Phi Delta Kappa, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the American Association of School Administrators. I also belong to the state affiliate of these international and national organizations.

6. I serve as a member of AASA's Strategic Planning Committee, and I am the chairperson of ASBO's School Plant Planning Committee.

Experiences:

1. I have served for 5 years as a mathematics and science teacher at the senior high level.

2. I have been a middle school assistant principal for 2 years, and a high school principal for 5 years.

3. I have served two districts in a central office capacity. In one, I was the business manager for 2 years; and in my present position, I am the assistant superintendent of instruction.

4. Over the past 11 years of administration, I have attended national workshops and training sessions on matters of finance, personnel, and instruction.

5. I have experience in making presentations to and working directly with boards of education and with individual board of education members.

Skills:

1. I possess the following technical skills: (a) I am competent in the areas of strategic, tactical, and operational planning. (b) I am competent in developing, monitoring, and evaluating both the income and the expenditure aspects of the budget. (c) I am competent in the maintenance, repair, and construction of school building and in the development of school sites. I can develop educational specifications, develop bond issue proposals, and monitor the construction processes. (d) I am an excellent communicator in both speaking and writing. (e) I possess the ability to skillfully delegate tasks and to monitor the progress of the tasks that have been delegated.

2. I possess the following people skills: (a) I modify my behavior to fit the individual or the group with whom I am working. That is, I work differently with inexperienced or immature individuals and groups than I do with experienced and mature groups. (b) I modify my behavior to fit the situational conditions that exist at the moment. That is, I will become an attentive and an active listener

with an individual or group that is clearly in an emotional state. I become a discussion leader, a teller, a seller, or a team member when that is the appropriate behavior to exhibit. (c) I prefer working collaboratively with individuals and groups, but I can be very directive when the situation calls for directive leadership. (d) I can build teams who enjoy their work and are productive in their efforts. That is, they possess feelings of satisfaction and ownership.

Once you have analyzed your strengths related to your desired administrative position(s), you can begin the task of developing your credentials. That is, you want to make certain that everything that will assist you in obtaining your desired administrative position(s) is clear and in writing.

DEVELOPING YOUR CREDENTIALS

Developing your credentials is a serious task, as your credentials will not only identify the important characteristics you wish to emphasize to any prospective employer, but they will be the written presentation of yourself that is held in such locations as your university's placement office. It is important that you keep your credentials up to date as you change positions or as you develop new knowledge, training, experiences, and skills that will strengthen your probability of being a successful job candidate.

Although you may wish to modify the contents of your credentials to best fit the administrative position(s) in which you are interested, at a minimum, your credentials should include the items listed below.

1. Your name
2. Address
3. Business and home phone numbers
4. A listing of your professional training
5. A listing of your professional experiences
6. References from those persons who you feel know you well and those that the reader will find to be impressive references (These references can include well-known college professors, fellow administrators, national association officers, well-known legislators, state department of education officials, college administrators, or other helpful individuals.)

You would be wise to vary the references depending on the specific job(s) for which you are applying. It is especially helpful if you know persons who will impress the individual(s) with whom you are applying.

Make certain that a copy of your credentials is deposited at the placement office of every college and university that you attended. Get to know the placement director and the assistant placement directors. They will also make available to their graduates position openings, and many college and university placement offices provide a biweekly mailing of position openings.

Sometimes the persons who you feel will write positive references instead will write general gobbledygook or negative and harmful references. This is sad, but I know many individuals who acted as though they would write a positive reference and who, instead, wrote very negative references that harmed individuals' probability of obtaining their desired positions. The solution to this matter is to periodically ask the placement director to review your credential file and to advise you if she or he would recommend removing certain specific references and/or adding additional helpful references.

Although many times you will find administrative opportunities listed in sources other than your college's or university's placement bulletins and many times you will have to develop a series of application materials that do not include the credential file that is in place at your college or university, you must be certain to put your best foot forward. One of your biggest assets is very favorable references from your employers and from influential people in the field.

SOLICITING FAVORABLE REFERENCES

If you are looking for your first administrative position, your best source of references is principals of buildings in which you served and the superintendents of those districts. Your next best source of references are well-known college professors of educational administration. You can add community officials, leaders of associations, and one or two teachers with whom you worked. In all cases, make certain that they know you well and that you have ensured the probability of obtaining a successful recommendation. It is helpful to the person writing the recommendation if you

indicate the type of job you wish and the specific strengths that you would like him or her to emphasize in the recommendation she or he writes.

Obviously, if you are attempting to obtain a position as a central office administrator in the area of instruction, it is wise to obtain positive recommendations from those administrators for whom you have worked. It is especially helpful if they can emphasize your knowledge, experience, and capability in the areas of instruction. Again, the superintendent of schools, board of education members, well-known professors of curriculum and instruction, professional association leaders, well-known community members, and other positive source individuals should also be included in your references.

In many cases, the individual or school district functionaries who are conducting the search may ask for the addresses and telephone numbers of those persons you list as references. Before you list them, and each time you intend to use them, ask your reference persons' permission to reveal this information.

If a person is attempting to obtain a first superintendency or a subsequent superintendency, it is important to obtain excellent recommendations from the board members and the superintendent of schools in districts where he or she has worked. In addition, it may be helpful to obtain recommendations from well-known superintendents of other districts or well-known board members of other school districts. A recommendation from the state superintendent, intermediate school district superintendent, executive director of the state and national superintendent associations, executive director of the state and national school board associations, and other highly visible persons is desirable.

At the superintendent search level, many times search consultants (headhunters) are employed. It is wise for you to contact the consultants, tell them your interests, send them information about yourself, and attempt to obtain a personal interview with each of the major consulting firms. Many times they will assist you, especially if you fit within their specific category of candidate needs.

In addition to obtaining very favorable recommendations from selected references, it is important to take a great deal of time to develop an outstanding vita (résumé). Again, many times your letter of application and your vita will be the only means you have of initially communicating with potential employers. It is important that you develop these in a way that will make them stand out over the many other applicants for the position; if they do not, you

will never have the opportunity for a personal interview or for obtaining the position in which you are interested.

DEVELOPING YOUR VITA

The essentials of the vita or résumé will vary somewhat from one job category to another, but it always includes information about your education and training, your professional certification, and your professional experiences. Try to keep your vita as short as possible but of sufficient length to emphasize your credentials for the position for which you are applying. An example of a very basic vita is provided below.

Example Vita: The Basics
Joe D. Sanders
2102 West Belaire Drive
Copstile, Alabama 35278
Home phone: (205) 771-8632 Office: (316) 534-1878

Education:
1992: Ph.D. University of Manhattan
1986: M.A. Scripton State College
1981: B.S. Jackson University

Certification:
1992: Superintendent and central office administrator certificate
1990: Principal certificate
1981: Secondary math and science teaching certificate

Experience:
1990 - present: High school principal, Avondale High School, Avondale, MS
1987-1989: Assistant principal, Metronome High School, Fairbanks, AZ
1981-1986: Math and science teacher, Mountain High School, Rothford, NY

Once the basics have been completed, let's examine what could be added to assist in the three example positions we listed earlier in the chapter: (a) the teacher looking for her or his first assistant principalship or principalship, (b) the principal attempting to obtain a position as a districtwide curriculum director or an assistant superintendent of instruction, and (c) the current holder of a central

office administrative position who is attempting to obtain her or his first superintendency. Again, it is well to caution that the résumé should be as short as is practical but as long as necessary to emphasize the points that you feel will help you obtain the position you are after.

REVIEWING EXAMPLE VITAE

Assuming the basics are included in each vita, we can now look at what embellishments may be helpful to the candidates looking for specific administrative positions. Three examples are provided.

Example 1: Looking for an Assistant Principalship or a Principalship at the Elementary Level

RÉSUMÉ

Education:

Certification:

Experience:

Leadership:

I have worked as a summer school principal.

I have served as chairperson of four district-level curriculum committees.

Affiliations:

I hold membership in the Elementary Association NAESP and in the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Example 2: Looking for a Director of Curriculum or an Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Position

RÉSUMÉ

Education:

Certification:

Experience:

Leadership:

I have served as the president of the state's Secondary Principals' Association.

I have served as a member of the district's Superintendent's Advisory Cabinet.

Honors:

I was selected to be the state's Principal of the Year in 1992.

Affiliations:

I hold memberships in ASCD, NASSP, and Phi Delta Kappa.

Example 3: A Central Office Administrator Looking for Her or His First Superintendency

RÉSUMÉ

Education:

Certification:

Experience:

Leadership:

During the 1990-1992 period, I served as the chair of the National Association of Central Office Administrators' Committee on Governance.

In 1989, I served as president of our local chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.

Honors:

In 1991, I received the state's Rotary Club medal for being selected as Educator of the Year.

Publications:

Making instructional decisions that count. (1989). *Curriculum Journal, 78*(3), 18-24.

How to be an effective administrator. (1991). *Future Management, 63*(7), 3-10.

Affiliations:

ASCD, ASBO, NASSP, Phi Delta Kappa

Now that we have thoroughly explored the first steps in preparing your winning profile, let's take time to summarize particularly successful hints.

SUCCESSFUL HINTS

Although numerous hints will be woven throughout this book, those that specifically apply to preparing a winning profile include the following:

1. There is no such thing as too much planning if you wish to be successful.
2. Seek out and develop contacts that will eventually provide you with excellent references, many of whom will also be able to assist you with leads to administrative positions that come open.
3. Remember, all of us have strengths. Analyze yours, prioritize them, and determine which ones to emphasize as you apply for the specific position in which you are interested.
4. Develop an outstanding vita that will make you stand out in a crowd. Take a lot of time developing it, and modify it for each position to which you are applying.
5. Do your background preparation work well and then start looking for the administrative position(s) you desire.

At the end of each chapter, a series of exercises are presented. I hope that you will take time to seriously complete each exercise, as they are intended to provide meaningful reflective experiences that will assist you in preparing for your administrative job search.

EXERCISES

Develop your strengths analysis by listing each strength you possess within the categories below. Next, prioritize the skills in each category from your strongest to your least strong. Finally, determine which ones you wish to emphasize for the specific administrative position for which you intend to apply.

Knowledge I possess:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Training and professional activities I've completed:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Experiences I have had:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Technical skills I possess:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

People skills I possess:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Make a list of potential positive reference sources, using the categories listed below. Remember to ask their permission to use them for references, and then ask them to write a reference for your placement file. Also, ask permission to provide their addresses and phone numbers to prospective employers.

Administrators for whom I have worked:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Well-known professors of educational leadership:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

State and national professional association leaders:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Other highly visible and helpful reference source persons:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Many times members of consulting firms can be very helpful to you if they are acquainted with your desired positions and your strengths. List the consulting firms that you should contact.

Consulting firm executives I should contact:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Develop an outstanding résumé that will put your best image forward to potential employers. Use the basic structural categories listed below to get you started.

Education:

Certifications:

Experiences:

Leadership positions:

Honors:

Other items that will make me stand out from the crowd:

2

Locating and Selecting Potential Positions

Chapter 2 discusses the multiple sources that you can use to locate administrative vacancies in which you may be interested, the roles of professional job search consultants (commonly called "headhunters"), and the means of determining the potential "best fit" of the position to your identified needs and strengths. The chapter ends with a series of successful hints and with some reflective exercises that you should complete.

SOURCES OF ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION VACANCIES

There are three basic means of locating administrative positions that are available and in which you may be interested. They consist of (a) print contacts, (b) place contacts, and (c) people contacts. Let's explore the variety of sources under each of these headings.

Print Contacts

Print contacts consist of newspapers, association bulletins, college and university bulletins, and association journals. A listing

of a dozen of the best national sources of vacancy listings in educational administration include the following:

1. The National Association of Secondary Principals' job listing publications
2. The National Association of Elementary School Principals job listing publications
3. The Association of School Business Officials-International's job listing publications
4. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's job listing publications
5. The American School Board Association's job listing publications
6. *Education Week*'s section titled "The Marketplace"
7. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* (although its main focus is on professorial and higher education administrative vacancies, it also lists public school administration vacancies)
8. The American Association of School Administrators' job listing publications
9. State departments of education job listings
10. College and university placement offices' job listing bulletins
11. The Sunday edition of the *New York Times*
12. *Personnel* journal

Some of the listings give comprehensive details, whereas other listings are sketchy. In any case, you must follow up on your initial interest by obtaining much more detailed information before actually applying for an administrative position that is listed in a print source.

Two actual examples will illustrate the variance in the details provided in the announcement of vacancies. The first rather comprehensive example relates to an announcement of principals' vacancies, and the second, more abbreviated example is a superintendent vacancy announcement. The principals' vacancies announcement comes from *Education Week*'s section titled "The Marketplace," and the superintendent vacancy announcement comes from the American Association of School Administrators' publication, *Leadership News*, which has a section titled "Job Bulletin."

Sample 1: High School Principals

Phoenix Union High School District
Phoenix, Ariz.

The Phoenix Union High School District, located in the heart of the Valley of the Sun, seeks applications from dynamic administrators to assume the principalships of three ethnically diverse 9-12 high schools of approximately 2,500 students: South Mountain, Camelback, Maryvale High Schools.

The successful candidates must have a record of achievement that demonstrates the ability to create a vision for the school and to translate that vision into reality. The principal is responsible for the academic achievement of students and fostering a positive growth climate for students and staff. Candidates must have the following qualifications:

- an Arizona Secondary Principal Certificate or be eligible for certificate;
- a master's degree or better;
- knowledge of curriculum, latest developments in instructional methods, media and school improvement;
- awareness of special needs of students (ethnic, exceptional, and linguistic);
- knowledge of and experience in the process of school improvement;
- training and experience in school management.

Salary range is $65,855-$80,000 DOE

The following items must be on file for consideration by Dec. 1, 1993: completed district application, resume, three letters of recommendation and college/university transcripts. These positions are open until filled. For a complete list of qualifications and application contact:

Carlton Jones
Assistant Superintendent for Employee Relations
Phoenix Union High School District
4502 N. Central Ave.
Phoenix, Ariz. 85012
(602) 271-3118

The Phoenix Union High School District is an equal opportunity employer (Staff, *Education Week*, 1993, p. 27)

Sample 2: Superintendent Berlin Central School District (NY)

1,100; $70-75,000, three-year contract; 12/10/93; to be announced; John Sackett or Ann Myers Nepo, Consultants, 1550 Schurman Road,

Castleton, New York 12033; (518) 477-8771. (Staff, *Leadership News*, 1993, p. 6)

Although you have some information about the educational administration position in which you may be interested, you should find persons who know more about the job and then have long phone conversations with them. This is an important step, because there may be some information that is not evident from the vacancy posting that will determine whether or not you will submit your application and the other materials requested by the school district.

Using the example of the Berlin Central School District's superintendency vacancy, it is clear that you should, at a minimum, phone the consultants who were hired by the district. Some of the types of questions that you may wish to ask them include the following:

- What are the names, occupations, and length of service of the board of education members?
- What are the names, job titles, and length of service of all of the district's administrators?
- What employee unions exist in the district? Who are the union leaders? What is the length of their service in the leadership position?
- Is the community supportive of the school district, as evidenced by successful budget votes and other manifestations of support?
- Are there any innovative curriculum programs being sponsored by the school district? If so, what are they?
- What are the students' achievement levels, as measured by norm-referenced and/or criteria-referenced test results?
- What is the student dropout rate?
- What percentage of students go on to advanced education after graduation from high school?
- What is the financial condition of the district?
- What is the relationship of the board members, one to another, and what is the board's relationship to the superintendent?
- Why did the previous superintendent leave the job (fired, resigned under pressure, retired, obtained a better job)?
- What is the relationship of the superintendent to the other district administrators?
- What is the relationship of the superintendent to community power individuals and groups and to the community as a whole?
- What is the relationship of the superintendent to the employee unions' leaders?
- What is the superintendent's relationships to the teachers and to other school employees?

- What cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities are available in the area?
- What is the general cost of living in the area?
- What salary will the board of education be willing to pay?
- What fringe benefits will the board of education be willing to include in the superintendent's contract?
- What length of contract will the board of education be willing to offer the superintendent?
- Are there any other important pieces of information about the school district and the area that you can share with me?

Although print information is helpful in obtaining a listing of job vacancies, organizational contacts also provide a source of information about administrative job openings or about potential future administrative vacancies.

Place Contacts (Organizational)

Some of the prime organizational contacts should include the following:

If you are interested in an assistant principalship or a principalship, your county or regional principals' association, your state principals' association, and your national principals' association are good contact points.

If you are interested in becoming a school business official, your county, state, and national school business officials' organizations are helpful contact points.

If you are interested in becoming an assistant superintendent for instruction or a curriculum director, your county, state, and national associations for supervision and curriculum development are helpful contact organizations.

If you are interested in obtaining your first or a different superintendent of schools position, your county, state, and national associations of school administrators are your primary contact points. Also, the county, state, and national school board associations might prove to be beneficial contacts.

All of the colleges' and universities' placement offices are always good contact organizations.

All professional job consulting firms or associations that provide headhunting services to school districts are excellent sources of information about administrative job openings.

People Contacts

Without a doubt, the most successful way to locate administrative positions in which you may be interested is through your people contacts. I recommend that you join groups and associations that include persons in the category of administrative positions you desire to hold, and network with as many helpful individuals and groups as you can. This is the most effective and absolutely the best way to know about vacancies before they become open and about potential future vacancies.

By making sure that you are on a conversational and two-way assistance basis with these individuals, you will find your job search to be easier and more focused. Make certain that these individuals know you are looking, and tell them the specific positions and conditions for which you are looking.

In addition to those persons who are in your network, make certain that you add other individuals who may be extremely helpful to you. Some of the main persons to inform of your desires, and from whom to ask for assistance, are the following:

Your immediate administrative supervisor. This could be your principal, a central office administrator to whom you report, or a superintendent of schools. It will be especially helpful if this person has high professional visibility and if this person is willing to mentor and assist you. In fact, as this person moves on, she could recommend you to replace her or she may create a position for you in the new organization in which she has taken a leadership position.

Your college and university placement officials and their secretaries. Make sure you stop and have a personal visit at least once each year. Also, make certain that you become very friendly with the placement office secretary(ies) and ask them to inform you of any job openings related to the type of position you desire. They might assist you in obtaining first-class treatment from your college and university placement offices.

State department of education officials. These people will be helpful, as they many times know of administrative vacancies that exist and of those that are pending. Get to know these people and offer to serve on some of the state department's committees.

Your college and university professors of educational leadership and educational administration. Certain professors who have high professional visibility or who moonlight as job search consultants (headhunters) for school districts are especially helpful.

Your personal friends who are in educational administration. They will work hard to assist their friend, and they may be able to strongly suggest you as a candidate for an administrative position in their school district. Also, they may be in a position to strongly recommend you to neighboring school districts.

Now that we have made contact and used the print information listing educational administrative vacancies, contacted those organizations that may be helpful in your job search, and used your networks and friends to assist you in locating the position(s) you desire, you are at the point of comparing your strengths and needs with the specifics that are offered by each district that possesses a job for which you might apply. Your search, using the three locator suggestions, has helped to find the positions in which you have an interest; now you have to compare each position to determine the "best fit" for you.

DETERMINE THE "BEST FIT" TO YOUR NEEDS AND STRENGTHS

It will be helpful for you to create two matrices that will assist you in determining if the job(s) for which you are applying are truly "best fits" for you. It is important that, if you are married, this is done with your spouse and family members, for they are also affected by any move you may make. Finally, it is wise sometimes to establish a weighting scale for your needs and strengths as they relate to the job for which you intend to apply.

Using the principals' vacancies listed by the Phoenix Union High School District, let's develop two hypothetical matrices. The first is a comparison of the district's desires with the applicant's strengths, and the second is a comparison of the district's desires with the candidate's needs. In cases of a perfect match between the job and the candidate, a "10" weighting will be given. Any partial match can be given a value of "1" through "9" by the candidate, depending on his opinion of how closely the two sources match one another. When the matrices are completed, the candidate can total

the points, and he can pretty well determine the desirability of the position for which to apply.

District's Desires Compared With Candidate's Strengths Matrix

Candidate	Points	District
1. Multicultural experience	10	1. Ethnically diverse
2. Ph.D.	10	2. M.A. or better
3. Ariz. certificate	10	3. Ariz. certificate
4. Curriculum, instruction, media, and improvement knowledge	7	4. Curriculum, instruction, media, and improvement knowledge
5. Awareness of special students' needs	10	5. Awareness of special students' needs
6. Knowledge/experience in school improvement	10	6. Knowledge/experience in school improvement
7. Training/experience in school management	10	7. Training/experience in school management
TOTAL SCORE	67	

District's Desires Compared With the Candidate's Needs Matrix

Candidate	Points	District
1. Salary of $45,000+	10	1. Salary $65,855-$80,000
2. Rural area	0	2. Metropolitan area
3. Multicultural	10	3. Multicultural
4. High school principal	10	4. High school principal
5. Single high school district	10	5. Single high school district
6. No candidate criteria	0	6. Visionary
TOTAL SCORE	40	

From the first matrix, the candidate can determine that his strengths and the district's desired qualities match very well. However, the second matrix indicates a serious mismatch between the candidate's needs and the district's desires. In this specific case, the candidate would do well not to apply for this administrative opportunity and to continue his search for a better match.

Now that we have discussed the sources of locating job vacancies and the matrices that will allow the candidate to analyze her- or himself and the jobs, it is time to summarize the hints that will prove most successful to the candidate.

SUCCESSFUL HINTS

Now that a listing of successful hints has been provided above, it is time to put you to work. Please complete the reflective exercises listed below. These exercises will assist you in thinking through the actions you should take as you begin your job search.

EXERCISES

List the sources that you feel you can call upon to assist you in locating educational administrative vacancies in which you may be interested. Use the three categories of print, place (organizations), and people sources.

Print job sources:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Place sources (organizations):

1.
2.
3.
etc.

People sources:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List each job for which you are considering applying and make two matrices comparing (a) your needs with the school district's desires and (b) your strengths with the school district's desires. Weight the items, with "10" being the "best fit" and "0" being no fit.

My needs compared with the district's desires:

My needs	Points	District's desires
1.		1.
2.		2.
3.		3.
etc.		etc.

My strengths compared with the district's desires:

My strengths	Points	District's desires
1.		1.
2.		2.
3.		3.
etc.		etc.

3

Making Your Job Application

Chapter 3 discusses the topics of (a) using your Job Strategy Book, (b) putting your best foot forward, (c) stressing the reasons you want that specific position, (d) responding directly to the points of the position vacancy announcement, (e) ending with a convincing tone, and (f) reviewing example letters of application. The chapter ends with a series of successful hints and a series of reflective exercises.

USING YOUR JOB STRATEGY BOOK

As you are about to apply for the job(s) in which you are interested, it wise to take time to review your Job Strategy Book. If you have not yet developed one, it is helpful to do so prior to making your job applications. I suggest that you use a three-ring notebook that is subdivided into a series of separate sections. The sections probably should include the following: (a) my knowledge, (b) my experiences, (c) my technical skills, (d) my people skills, (e) my needs (financial, geographic, cultural, and other), (f) print sources of job vacancies (titles and access information), (g) organizational sources of job vacancies (titles, addresses, and phone

numbers), (h) people sources of job vacancies (names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers), (i) persons who have agreed to write recommendations (names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers), (j) my *living* résumé, (k) my letters of application, (l) jobs for which I have applied, (m) jobs for which I have had interviews (name, location, and contact person), (n) analyses of schools or school districts for which I have had an interview, (o) potential interview questions, (p) questions that I have been actually asked during my job interviews, (q) helpful books and articles, and (r) other information that I feel is important to retain.

It is important to keep the information updated as you continue your job search. It is also helpful to retain your Job Strategy Book after you have accepted the educational administrative position you desired, as it will serve as a useful source of information in the future when you are interested in changing administrative positions.

PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

Your letter of application and the initial information that the school district has requested become your entry as a candidate. Because most excellent jobs will have numerous candidates, and because your application letter and other initial materials will be used to screen you in or out of further consideration, it is important that you do the best you can to make yourself stand out from the other candidates.

STRESSING WHY YOU WANT THAT SPECIFIC POSITION

At a minimum, your letter of application should emphasize why you are interested in the specific position, what strengths you will bring to the specific position and to the school district, and any other information that will make you stand out from the crowd. Although your letter of application should be brief, you can enclose a résumé that will provide a great deal of information about yourself.

RESPONDING DIRECTLY TO THE POSITION VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

If you know the specific needs of the school district or school as listed in the vacancy announcement, or those that you detected from your homework on the position, you should make certain that you emphasize how your training, experiences, and interests meet the characteristics the school district desires. The better you can display the "best fit" characteristic between you and the specific administrative position, the more likely you will be asked to the next selection step—the interview.

ENDING WITH A CONVINCING TONE

The way in which you end your letter of application is important, for it is the last thing that the persons screening the application will read. I suggest that you use the last short paragraph of your letter of application to emphasize why *you* are interested in that *specific administrative position* and what *strengths you have to offer.* This may appear redundant; but, if done briefly and well, in one or two short sentences, it will emphasize to the reader the major points you wish to make.

A few examples of letters of application of varying quality are provided. Although these are actual letters of application, the names of the school districts (schools) and of the person(s) applying are fictitious. As you review them, analyze them and determine the strengths and weaknesses of each. Next, determine what you could write to strengthen each. My analyses of the letters appear in the section following the letters.

EXAMPLE LETTERS OF APPLICATION

Example 1: Assistant Superintendent for Special Services

October 20, 1993
Joe D. Falter
2102 Bing Drive, SW
Hempstead, RI

Dr. Charles Solid
Superintendent
Conservative City Board of Education
100 Right Street
North Hampton, MI

Dear Dr. Solid:

Please find enclosed the completed application form and the supporting documents you requested.

In my brief investigation into your school district, I have found a reputation of both dedication to and support for the school system. I have also found your school district's reputation for quality to be one of the highest in Rhode Island. I believe working in such a system would be both rewarding and enjoyable.

In my current position as Special Services Coordinator of a small school system, I work quite closely with almost all aspects of the daily administration of the system. This has made me uniquely aware of how the many different facets of the system should and must work together to accomplish the larger goals. Such experience is, I believe, a strong asset.

My employment by your school district as the Assistant Superintendent for Special Services would, I feel, be quite mutually beneficial. I look forward to future discussion concerning joining your school system.

Sincerely,

Joe D. Falter

Example 2: Elementary Principal

3433 Southampton Circle
Birmingham, CT
November 6, 1993

Mr. James T. Boron, Director
Personnel Services
Stover City School District
1855 Datum Drive
Westerfield, CT

Dear Mr. Boron:

Please accept this letter as a request for me to be considered for the position of Elementary Principal as described and posted in your announcement dated October 26, 1993. I have enclosed a copy of my resume for your review and look forward to an opportunity to discuss my experiences and ideas and our mutual interests.

Sincerely yours,

Joy P. Smith

Example 3: Assistant High School Principal

3872 Spring Valley Road
Memphis, Tennessee 35223
(205) 982-1164
August 30, 1993

Dr. Frank Ostello
Director of Personnel
Temperence School District
102 Pine Avenue
Flat Rock, AZ

Dear Dr. Ostello:

I am writing this letter to inform you of my hopes and aspirations for the future and also to present you with my credentials. I had planned to share my professional goals with you if I am granted an interview. However, when I learned about your opening for a high school assistant principal, I decided that it might be wise to share my ambitions with you now. I certainly would appreciate your consideration of me as a candidate for this position.

I am currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Educational Leadership. The Educational Leadership major and a minor in Secondary Curriculum and Instruction provide me with a strong academic background in administration and supervision. My other minor, Chemistry Education, allows me to pursue my love of science. Although I have been in the Ph.D. program for less than a year, my previous academic work has significantly lessened the time required for the completion of my doctoral program. I merely must complete two additional classes in my major and a research sequence before beginning work on my dissertation. If all goes as planned, I hope to finish the program in 1995.

My love of science and teaching and my desire for self-growth led to the formulation of my first-choice goal for the future. I would love to obtain a job as an assistant high school principal. My 12 years of teaching experience, my certifications in chemistry, biology, and administration, and my professional activities all provide me with the credentials to be outstanding as an assistant high school principal.

Serving in numerous university grant programs for chemistry teachers has allowed me to experience the pleasure of working with other teachers to improve science instruction in classrooms across the state.

I am enclosing a copy of my resume for your file. Please consider this as my request to be considered for your announced position of assistant high school principal.

Sincerely,

Theresa R. Cody

Example 4: Elementary Principal

3505 Springhill Road
Birmingham, Alabama 36123
November 21, 1993

Dr. James Good
Personnel Coordinator
Gadsen Area School District
1463 Brown Boulevard
Gadsen, TN

Dear Dr. Good:

"HIGH ENERGY"—that is how everyone I know describes me. I'm energetic, enthusiastic, and try to make a difference every day in childrens' lives. I have the unique ability to be able to work well with parents, teachers, and children.

Though I live in Birmingham, Alabama, it never dawned on me to apply for your elementary principal's position until I worked on an assignment for one of my university classes. My assignment was to do some research about a school system of my choice, and I decided to do one on a school system in another state. I chose your school system, and the more I learned about it from the people I interviewed, the more excited I became.

I was Teacher of the Year for the Birmingham Public Schools and represented our system in the state competition. I also was the system's nominee for the Teacher Hall of Fame. I have served on scores of committees, including curriculum committees for the State Department of Education and the Birmingham Board of Education. I served on the accreditation team for the Bancroft City Schools. I have been awarded thousands of dollars in mini-grants for unique programs I created and implemented for my schools. In 1985, I was selected to be the guest speaker and moderator at the Birmingham City Schools Teacher Institute, where I addressed 3,000 of my colleagues.

I have published two books, served as a leader and active member in many of my pr fessional organizations, and have experience as an interim principal, and as an assistant elementary principal.

It is clear from my interview of some of your constituents that your school district's parents want the very best teachers and administrators for their children. I HAVE THE EXPERIENCE, COMMITMENT, LOVE, SKILLS, and DRIVE TO GET THE JOB DONE as their principal.

Yours sincerely,

Ina Sheer

Example 5: Superintendent of Schools

The following letter of application was written in response to a recruiting brochure developed by a school district to attract candidates for the vacant position of their superintendent of schools. The main points stressed in the school district's recruiting brochure include the following:

- Has prior experience as a superintendent of schools
- Has strong human relations skills; is sincere, honest, self-confident, open, creative, accessible, and dependable
- Possesses integrity, high ethical standards, sense of humor, and common sense
- Has experience that demonstrates an ability to anticipate and analyze major issues, to outline alternative courses of action, and to make clear recommendations to the school board based on sound educational and financial considerations
- Has an overriding concern for the welfare of all children and is sensitive to the values, interests, and needs of students with differing economic, cultural, scholastic, racial, and religious backgrounds
- Is a visible and articulate spokesperson, actively involved in the schools and community
- Has the ability to interact with parental organizations, employee associations, and student associations through two-way communications
- Is a strong advocate of public education, competent in forging partnerships with business, industry, organizations, and educational foundations
- Has the ability to delegate, to empower, and to support the staff to fulfill their responsibilities
- Has demonstrated an in-depth understanding of school finance, budgeting, and business operations
- Has an ability to plan and the energy to lead the school district through construction and modernization projects and has an *awareness* of the intricacies of planning new facilities and maintaining existing ones

4509 Lakeview Drive
Troutstream, Wyoming
February 3, 1994

Mr. Robert Smart
President
Board of Education
Palm Springs School District
Palm Springs, Washington

Dear Mr. Smart:

Please accept this correspondence as official application for the position of Superintendent in the Palm Springs School District. I am enclosing my resume, the district's completed application form, and a list of references you may wish to contact.

In order to be brief, I will enumerate my responses to the specific characteristics that you listed in your recruitment brochure:

1. I have fifteen years of experience as a superintendent in four districts in New York, Virginia, and California.

2. I have excellent human relations skills, and you are free to phone any of my references to determine the accuracy of this.

3. I have the highest ethical standards and also a good sense of humor. Again, you may wish to check this with my references.

4. I have anticipated many major issues and have successfully handled all those with which I have been faced. I have expertise in strategic, tactical, and operational planning.

5. I am clearly a child advocate, and I review all student achievement data, on a disaggregated basis, to make certain no student drops through the cracks.

6. I have successfully worked with and enjoyed my relationships with children and parents of all ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and educational levels.

7. I am a visible spokesperson, and I am actively involved with the community in cultural, civic, planning, and social activities.

8. I have established student, employee, and parent advisory committees to the superintendent; and I have gained permission from all of my boards of education to introduce site-based management committees at the individual school level.

9. I strongly advocate public education; and I have formed eighty-four partnerships with business, industry, and civic organizations. I also have assisted in the obtaining of $8,246,000 in foundation and external grants within the last five years.

10. I use an MBO (Management by Objectives) system to delegate, monitor, and empower others.

11. I have great depth of financial understanding, having obtained an MBA degree in finance and accounting. I control the budget by having site managers, and using program and zero-based budgeting structures to monitor the expenditures. I have never had a budget deficit.

12. In my fifteen years as superintendent, I have been involved in the construction and remodeling of $120,000,000 worth of school construction. I have written a book on school construction; and I teach a school plant planning class, as an adjunct, for our local university.

I shall look forward to an opportunity to interview. If you wish additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Jerry M. Strong

Encls: résumé, list of references.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EACH LETTER

Example 1

Strengths:

- It is short.

Weaknesses:

- The entire letter is too general.
- If there are numerous applicants, there is nothing in Joe's letter to make him stand out above the crowd.

Example 2

Strengths:

- None

Weaknesses:

- It almost appears to be a form letter that was sent to every possible job vacancy.
- It is a sure loser for Joy.

Example 3

Strengths:

- It indicates her professional goals.
- It describes her educational and experiential background.

Weaknesses:

- It appears that she should stay as a science teacher or that she should apply for a position as a science curriculum supervisor.
- It does not focus on the role of the assistant principal. In fact, the letter works against the assistant principalship role.
- It's probably a loser for Theresa.

Example 4

Strengths:

- It stands out as an attention getter.
- It briefly outlines a number of successes Ina has had.
- It notes that she has gathered insights from talking to some of the parents in advance of making the job application.
- If the reviewers like Ina's enthusiasm, she could be a winner.

Weaknesses:

- This is a high-risk approach.
- If the reviewers don't like the initial section or the closing, Ina might be eliminated from further consideration.

Example 5

Strengths:

- It relates directly to the characteristics listed in the school district vacancy brochure.
- It describes the experience that Jerry has related to each characteristic listed in the announcement brochure.
- It provides a great deal of specific information in a relatively short letter of application.
- It probably would lead to an invitation to interview.

Weaknesses:

- It may be a little too long. Condense it to two typed pages.

SUCCESSFUL HINTS

Making a job application is a serious business. It should be done with much seriousness, and after much thought. Some hints that will assist you as you begin to write your job application letters are listed below.

1. If you have not already prepared a Job Strategy Book, do so before writing your letter(s) of application. The information that

you have previously collected and placed in this notebook will assist you in writing better letters of application, and the notebook will assist you in doing a thorough and professional job at all stages of your search for an educational administration position.

2. Keep your application letter brief—no more than two pages. At a minimum, emphasize why you desire that specific job and the strengths that you will bring to that job and to the school district.

3. You can enclose a résumé with your application letter that will provide the reader with more details about yourself. The application letter, the résumé, and any other information (such as the application form sent you by the school district) that is requested by the school district will determine whether or not you will move to the next step—the personal interview.

4. If specific desired characteristics are listed in the school district's position vacancy, or if you can determine the desired characteristics through your background investigation of the job (if they were not listed in the vacancy announcement), make certain that you address each of them in your letter of application. For each characteristic, explain how your training, strengths, skills, and/or experiences are well matched to each specific characteristic.

5. Remember that the last paragraph in your letter of application will be the last words read by those persons who are screening the numerous applicants for the position for which you have applied. Use a brief two-sentence paragraph to summarize (a) why you are interested in obtaining that specific administrative position and (b) what strengths you have to offer that position and the school district and how these strengths fit well with the characteristics the school district desires.

6. Double-check everything before you submit. Poor quality paper; grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; incomplete or inaccurate information; lack of response to the characteristics the school district has outlined; or any other matter that will indicate that you have not paid close attention to what you submitted will probably eliminate you from the search.

7. In your letter of application, do not repeat detailed information that is already contained in your enclosed résumé or in the application form that the school district had you complete. Use it to emphasize what you wish to emphasize, not to be redundant and to detail information covered elsewhere.

EXERCISES

If you have not yet developed one, please do some reflective thinking and develop your Job Strategy Book now. I suggest that you use a three-ring notebook that is subdivided into a series of separate and clearly marked sections. Use the following outline to develop your Job Strategy Book.

MY JOB STRATEGY BOOK

My knowledge base for these jobs:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

My experiences that relate to these jobs:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

My technical skills that relate to these jobs:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

My people skills that relate to these jobs:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

My needs:

Financial

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Geographic

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Cultural

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Other needs

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Sources of information about educational administration job vacancies:

Print sources (titles and access information)

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Organizational sources (titles, addresses, phone numbers)

1.
2.
3.
etc.

People sources (names, titles, addresses, phone numbers)

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Persons who have agreed to write recommendations (names, titles, addresses, phone numbers):

1.
2.
3.
etc.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

My *living* résumé (keep updated):

My letters of application:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Jobs for which I have applied (name, location, contact person):

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Jobs for which I have had interviews (name, location, and contact person):

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Analysis of school district (or school) for which I have had an interview:

Potential interview questions:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Questions that I have actually been asked during my job interviews (separated by each job):

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Helpful books and articles:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Other information that I feel is important to retain:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

It is important to keep the information updated as you continue your job search. It is also helpful to retain your Job Strategy Book after you have accepted the educational administrative position you desired, as it will serve as a useful source of information in the future when you are interested in changing administrative positions.

Write your letter of application below, and remember to refer specifically to the desires of the school district that are listed in the district's vacancy announcement. You may wish to write two or three different letters of application and then choose the one that you feel best fits the specific administrative position for which you are applying.

Remember, your letter of application and the résumé you enclose with it provide the only information that the employer has at this point in time. Somehow this has to impress the reviewer sufficiently to allow you to get to the next step—a personal interview.

4

Getting the Job Interview

Chapter 4 discusses a comprehensive set of topics, including the following: (a) letting your current employer know that you are applying elsewhere, and asking if she or he can be used as a reference; (b) talking to university professors of educational administration; (c) talking to your university placement office; (d) talking to professional consultants and discovering their role(s) in the search process; (e) determining when an apparent interview is a fake-out; (f) investigating the types of interview situations you may face; (g) having friends and colleagues interrogate you in preparation for the interview; (h) mentally preparing yourself for the interview; (i) visiting the site in advance of the interview (talking to realtors in the area; visiting shopping malls, restaurants, and other public areas; obtaining copies of local newspapers); (j) requesting advance information from the school or school district; (k) locating persons who work in the school or district, and asking them pertinent questions; (l) conducting yourself during the interview; and (m) following through after your interview. The chapter ends with a listing of successful hints and with a series of reflective exercises.

LETTING YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER KNOW THAT YOU ARE APPLYING ELSEWHERE

Whenever you are applying for a job, it is crucial that you let your current supervisor and/or employer know that you are applying. You should do this because most persons who are conducting a search, if they have even the least degree of sophistication, will phone your employer and ask him about your performance and strengths and weaknesses. If the person(s) doing the search phone your supervisor and he has not been previously informed by you that you are searching for a position in another district, your supervisor or employer may become disgruntled about it, and he may not provide as favorable a reference as you would have hoped.

In addition, certain states have laws and school districts have policies that require that all candidates for positions be made public. This is another good reason for informing your present employer that you are seeking an educational administrative position elsewhere.

Not informing your supervisor or employer in advance can give the impression that you are not pleased with your present position or she may feel that you do not trust her well enough to inform her of your job search. In either case, you may have lost a strong potential ally as you attempt to obtain the educational administration position of your choice. Also, don't forget, if you haven't previously done so, ask her to serve as a reference for you.

Also, in many cases, especially for the more advanced levels of educational administration positions, a member or two of the search team will want to visit your present place of employment and observe you in action. They will also want to talk to other employees, students, community members, and, in the case of a superintendency, to board members, employee union officials, and leaders of the community. For all of the above reasons, it is crucial for you to inform your supervisor and/or employer that you are applying for a specific administrative position and for you to solicit his or her assistance. If you neglect to do this and your supervisor or employer is hurt by your lack of trust, is angered with you, or is uncooperative, you have seriously injured your chances of obtaining the administrative position you desire.

TALKING TO UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Once you have selected the administrative position in which you are interested, have made application, and have been asked to interview, it is wise to talk to well-known university professors of educational administration to obtain more information about the specific position and about the school district. Many times these professors know updated information about the position and the district, as some of them make it a habit to assist their students and previous students to obtain administrative positions. In some cases, these professors also serve as members of initial screening teams for their university placement office's job searches, as members of initial screening teams for the state's administrators association or school board's association job searches or for the same national organizations' job searches, and some of them moonlight as official partners of professional search consulting companies.

TALKING TO YOUR UNIVERSITY PLACEMENT OFFICE

Before going for your interview, it is also wise to check with your university's placement office. Often, they will have been sent comprehensive information about the vacancy, about the school district, and about the community in which the school district is located. Because, many times, the school district will annually announce all of its vacancies to your placement office, and because many times the district will send recruiters to campus to interview candidates, the director and others in the placement office will know the officials of the school district well and thus may have a great deal of information to share about the vacancy and the school district.

In addition, some placement directors for colleges and universities serve as consultants to school districts in their preparation of materials for the search, in locating potential candidates, in preparing vacancy brochures, and in prescreening the multiple applications down to the number of candidates that the district wishes to consider for further investigation as possible hires. Usually when this service is performed, multiple placement officers are involved in each search situation when they perform this service function for school districts.

TALKING TO PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANTS AND DISCOVERING THEIR ROLE(S) IN THE SEARCH PROCESS

If the position vacancy announcement lists the names of a consultant or a professional consulting firm, make certain that you make contact with the consultant or firm, if they have not already contacted you, to learn more about the specific position that is available and about the school district and the community. Also, ask questions that will assist you in determining the role(s) that the consultant or the consulting firm are playing in the specific search.

You will be wise to have made phone contact with all the professional consulting firms *before* you begin your search rather than waiting for the interview situation to arise. When contacting them, you should tell them about yourself, and the type of administrative positions in which you are interested, and request their assistance. After the phone call, it is wise to write a thank-you letter and in this letter to remind the members of the firm of your interests. Also, enclose a vita with the letter and ask them to keep it on file for future use.

Some consultants and consulting firms have a stable of their "pet" candidates that they refer to school districts time after time. However, even these firms may need certain types of applicants who are in short supply or for whom the school district has a specific request. These may involve certain age groups, certain races, or certain sexes.

However, other consultants and consulting firms will have contracts with districts that have a truly wide-open search in which all applicants have an opportunity to be considered for the open educational administrative position. In addition, some professional consulting firms will welcome as many candidates as they can obtain, as this provides them with great flexibility as school districts contract with them to assist in the search for a candidate to fill a vacant position.

The role(s) of the professional consultant or the consulting firm vary with the contract they have signed with the school district and with the amount of money involved in that transaction. Consultants and consulting firms can offer any or all of the activities listed below, and it is wise for you to clearly determine the specific role(s) the consultant or consulting firm is playing in the search process for the administrative position in which you are interested. As an

example, if they, rather than the district, will screen the number of candidates the district will investigate, they may limit the number to five possibles from the much larger number of candidates who made initial job applications.

Role 1. They inform the board of education or the administrator of the methodologies used in a search process.

Role 2. They talk to all board members, administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members about what characteristics they desire in the person who is to fill the vacant administrative position.

Role 3. They develop an announcement to be placed in the many available professional outlets. Also, they send the vacancy announcement to university placement offices and to university departments of educational administration as well as to school districts when the vacancy is below the level of superintendent of schools.

Role 4. They develop a position brochure that may include the following: (a) information about the school district and the specific job opening; (b) information about the employer(s); (c) information about the community and the area; (d) certification, degree, and experience requirements; (e) the specifics that have to be followed in applying for the job; (f) the financial and other fringe benefits; (g) the criteria that will be used to screen and select candidates (usually gathered from the interviews with those persons in the district); and (h) the final date at which applications will be accepted.

Role 5. If the district has not already developed an administrator's application form, the consultant may be asked to do this.

Role 6. The consulting firm may have all applications mailed to the firm's offices.

Role 7. The consultant may make phone calls to gather background information about all or about selected candidates.

Role 8. The firm may fly, at the school district's expense, the best prospects into the firm's office to be interviewed by a couple of principals in the firm. This preliminary screening may eliminate

some of the candidates that initially looked like good bets to fill the announced vacancy, and it may increase the probability of other candidates going further in the selection process.

Role 9. The consultants may recommend to the school district, for its review, only a few of the numerous candidates who have originally applied for the job.

Role 10. If the employer or the employing district is not experienced in the interview process, the consultant may develop interview questions for each of the interviewers to ask the candidates who have been granted interviews and a score sheet to assist in obtaining consistent opinions from the interviewers.

Role 11. The consultant may arrange to bring in an administrator who is not applying for the job as a mock interviewee to have a trial run for the inexperienced interviewers and to make them more at ease with the interviewing process.

Role 12. One or two members of the interview firm may sit in as observers in all of the interviews, and they may provide feedback to the district's interviewers that will assist them in their interviewing procedures for the next candidate.

Role 13. If visits to the potential hiree's current place of work are in order, the consulting firm may call and make arrangements for the visit.

Role 14. Once the successful candidate is selected, the consulting firm may be asked to develop and mail to each of the unsuccessful candidates a *close-out letter* announcing the successful candidates name and thanking them for their interest in applying for the vacancy. This letter is always, however, signed by an official of the school district.

The amount of money the district spends will depend on how many of these roles the consulting firm is to do and how many applicants eventually will apply for the vacant position. When done properly, this is a time-consuming and expensive process.

Finally, as you can see from the above listing of roles, it is important for you to determine the exact roles that the consultant is playing in the search process. If the consultant is to select the three or five candidates that are referred to the school district for further

consideration, and if you know the consultant has the reputation of only recommending candidates that are in his "stable," you can pretty much determine you will not be the person that is recommended for an interview or the one that will be hired.

DETERMINING WHEN AN APPARENT INTERVIEW IS A FAKE-OUT

It is unfortunate but true that some situations in which you find yourself being asked to interview are pretensions. This type of interview is granted to give the impression of an open search or may be done to mask the fact that the district is truly not an equal opportunity employer in accordance with Title VII of the amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1972, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Some of the specific unfair but actual situations you may face as a candidate for an administrative position include the following:

1. Sometimes a national search will be conducted because the community expects to hire the best available person, and one or more external candidates will be interviewed even though the person(s) doing the hiring have already decided to hire an internal candidate.
2. Sometimes an older candidate, a younger candidate, a candidate of a certain race, or a candidate of a certain sex may be granted an interview when the district's decision makers and the consulting firm know, for certain, that whoever is chosen will have to be middle aged, white, and a male.
3. Sometimes the consulting firm may suggest that the district interview one or two persons who are not in the firm's stable and then assist the district's decision makers in eliminating them from consideration in favor of their much *stronger* stable candidate.

Politics, friendships, business contacts, and even religious background may influence the selection process. Such matters as divorce, living with someone but not being married, or having been previously fired—not because you were not successful but because there was a personality or political conflict—may eliminate you from consideration. It is also sad but realistic that the good old boys' and, perhaps, the good old girls' network may determine the outcome of the search.

All of these conditions exist, and I hope you will not have to experience one of these pretense interview situations. However, many searches are open and honest, and that type of search is what is being discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

INVESTIGATING THE TYPES OF INTERVIEW SITUATIONS YOU MAY FACE

You may face many types of interview situations. Two important things to remember are that (a) the person(s) doing the interview may not be the decision maker(s) and (b) from the moment someone first greets you upon your arrival in the school district, whenever you are introduced to someone, until the time you leave the district, *you are in an interview situation*. Some of the specific types of interview situations you may face include the following:

1. You may have an initial conference phone call interview.
2. You may be brought into the consulting firm's headquarters for an initial interview.
3. You may be given a series of simulation exercises to complete as an initial screening test, and someone will observe you and take notes.
4. You may have someone seat you at a tape recorder and have you respond to prerecorded questions while you are being observed.
5. You may be asked to interview with a series of community members, a series of PTA or PTO members, a group of students, a group of teachers, a group of classified employees, a group of administrators, or a board of education. Sometimes, individual board of education members take turns, often with their spouses present, showing you the district's physical plants, taking you to lunch or dinner, meeting you for breakfast, or conducting individual tours for one reason or another.

Regardless of the interview situation, always be on guard unless you are absolutely certain who will have the authority and the ability to make the final selections. It is also wise to determine which other person(s) may influence that final decision maker's opinion.

Finally, as you are escorted out by one of the interviewers, that person may tell you that you have done a wonderful job and that you are her or his choice. Don't be taken in by this—it may or may not be true, and it certainly will not guarantee that you are going to be hired.

HAVING FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES INTERROGATE YOU IN PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW

Whenever you have been asked to attend an interview situation, it is wise to gather a group of friends and/or colleagues around and ask them to assist you in preparing for your interview. Tell them all that you know about the school or school district, the job for which you applied, who will be doing the interviewing, and what type of interview situations you will be facing.

Once they possess this background information, ask them to act as an interview panel who will ask you a multitude of questions. The more difficult the questions and the greater the number asked, the better you will be prepared to answer anything that might be asked during the actual interview. This practice procedure will assist you in that you already will have thought of good answers for many of the questions that you will be asked during the actual interview.

If your friends and/or colleagues will go along with you, dress and act as if this is a real job interview situation and ask them also to play their roles seriously. The more lifelike the simulation can be, the better prepared you will be for the actual interview situation. You may ask that multiple sessions be held, making certain that they are conducted very close to the time that you are going for the actual interview.

Your friends and colleagues can provide you with helpful suggestions to improve your interview skills, and you may locate some voids in important areas of knowledge that you can fill prior to going to the actual interview. Try it, and it may very well be the advance preparation step that ensures your obtaining the administrative job you desire.

MENTALLY PREPARING YOURSELF FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

Before stepping into the interview situation, mentally prepare yourself. If you have done your homework well and if you have had your friends and colleagues conduct mock interviews, you should feel confident. Train yourself to be relaxed, positive, and knowledgeable. Display the real you; if you do not, you will have to live with your facade when you are given the job.

In addition, it is helpful, in mentally preparing yourself, to find out the name(s), position(s), and even to obtain a picture of the person(s) who will conduct the interview—and memorize them. You will be most effective if you can call a person by his or her name.

A very important piece of mental preparation is that of discovering, by your homework efforts, the personalities, likes, dislikes, and interests of the persons who are actually going to conduct your interview. The more specific information you possess about the persons who will do your interview, the better probability that you will be able to interact effectively with the interviewers—and the greater the likelihood that you will impress them.

VISITING THE SITE IN ADVANCE OF YOUR INTERVIEW

It is always wise to go incognito and visit the site for a day or two prior to the interview. These extra days will allow you to collect a lot of important information that you could not collect any other way. The major contact points at which you can collect valuable information will now be discussed.

Talking to Realtors in the Area

This is always helpful, but it is especially helpful if there are multiple school districts in the general area. Tell the realtors that you are thinking of locating in the general area and that you want to make certain that you buy a home in the best school district. Ask the realtors which district they would suggest. The realtors may not identify a single district, but you can bet that the better school districts will usually be those where the realtors can make the most money in fees for selling a house.

If there is only one school district in the town or area, still ask the realtor to give you information, from her or his view, about the quality of the school district. Additionally, school districts provide videotapes and other information about the district to the realtors in the school district's area.

Visiting Shopping Malls, Restaurants, and Other Public Areas

Spend a lot of time going to shopping malls, restaurants, and other public areas, and inform people that you are thinking of moving into the area. Ask them to give you their opinion of the quality of the school district. You will be surprised at how many of these people will take their time to give you their honest opinions. Try to make certain that you ask some retired residents, and, if you are lucky, you may also locate some parents who send their children to private schools.

Also, stop children and youth of different ages, and ask them what school they attend. Ask if they like school, if they like their teachers, and if they feel they are receiving a good education. Again, you will be surprised at how many youngsters will take the time to talk to you, and they definitely will give you honest answers. It is important, however, to ask the parents who are accompanying their youngsters for permission to talk to their children, and clearly explain why you want to talk to them.

Visiting Schools Within the District

It is also wise to drop in at a few of the district's schools, report to the office, and tell them that you are thinking of locating in the district. Ask if you can tour the school. By doing this, you can observe the students and employees and the cleanliness and maintenance levels of the buildings. Also, ask to talk to the principal and obtain information on the specific curricular and co-curricular offerings of the school.

Obtaining Copies of Local Newspapers

In addition to the contacts that you make with individuals, obtain copies of local newspapers to see what is being reported about the school district and the individual schools. If time permits, go to the newspapers' offices and seek permission to review the back issues that are retained in their morgues.

REQUESTING ADVANCE INFORMATION FROM THE SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT

It is reasonable to write or phone and ask that the school or the school district provide you with advance information. For example, when I was called for a superintendency vacancy, after I determined that I might be interested in that position, I asked, in advance of my actual interview date, that I be mailed a package that included the following information sources:

1. Three years of board of education meeting minutes
2. Three years of adopted budgets, and three years of budget audits
3. A board policy book
4. A listing of the names and positions of all board members and of all administrators including photos of the board members whenever they were available
5. Copies of all master contracts with employee unions
6. Information about students' test scores, dropout rates, and the percentage that go on to further education after graduation from high school
7. Information about the socioeconomic level of the community
8. Information about the racial mix of the student body
9. A copy of the district's organizational chart
10. A copy of any major strategic, tactical, or operational planning documents and of any significant reports on any matter
11. Copies of any unusual curricular or co-curricular offerings
12. Other information, depending on the specific school district that I was considering

Of course, the amount of advance information one requests not only varies with the specific school district, it also varies with the specific administrative position for which one is applying. For example, a person seeking an assistant principalship or a principalship may only desire advance information about student achievement, the curriculum offered, and the teaching and classified staff assigned to the building in which the principalship resides.

LOCATING PERSONS WHO WORK IN THE SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT AND ASKING THEM PERTINENT QUESTIONS

In advance of your interview, it is also helpful if you can locate persons who work in the school or school district that you are considering and ask them a series of pertinent questions. If you do not know anyone, perhaps you can locate an acquaintance who knows someone who works in the school and/or school district, and you can ask them to make the contact and report back to you.

CONDUCTING YOURSELF DURING THE INTERVIEW

When possible, ask the school district if they could set up sessions with students, fellow administrators, teachers, and parents during the time that you will be present in the district. This will usually impress the person(s) doing the interviewing if they have already not made such arrangements. When this is done, it becomes part of the total interview process. Let's take a few minutes at this juncture to discuss some points that should be stressed about the way you should conduct yourself during the formal interview process. The major points that I feel are important include the following:

1. Because *first impressions are very important*, be certain that you dress conservatively. You may have a special blue suit, a red dress, a great sports jacket, a lot of large jewelry, or other items that you enjoy. Even if the district is considered a liberal one, play it safe and dress conservatively.
2. Try to remember persons' names, and call each person by his or her name.
3. Always focus on the person asking the question, but use your peripheral vision to observe the facial and other nonverbal expressions of others involved in the interview.
4. If you don't have an answer to a specific question, respond honestly that you don't know much about that topic.
5. Be aware of your tone of voice and your body language. Do not, for example, slouch and put your arms on a table. Also, do not display nervous mannerisms or speak with a strained voice.

6. Don't try to answer a question immediately; if you want to, take a little wait time to provide a more complete answer.

7. Always answer each question honestly, because you will probably have to live with what you present. Being dishonest in your answers may occasionally assist you in obtaining the position you desire, but you will have to live with the dishonesty. If you have presented a false image and you behave differently on the job than the image you presented, you may soon be on your way to being removed from the position you attained.

8. Display a good knowledge of the district, based upon all the homework you have done. However, do not bury the interviewers with your knowledge of the district, as you may very well turn them off. Also, if you display greater knowledge of a variety of subjects than that possessed by interviewers who have spent many years in the district, you may scare them off from your candidacy.

9. Don't argue if you disagree with the opinion of an interviewer.

10. Don't discuss *hot issues* if you can possibly avoid them.

11. At the end of the interview, you will often be asked whether you have any questions for the interviewer(s). It is wise, at this point, to respond (a) that the interviewers and your homework have provided you with all the information that you feel you need, but ask permission to call to obtain additional information if you think of something important that you missed, and (b) ask if you can take a few minutes to stress why you desire the specific job in the specific district, emphasizing strengths that you will bring to the district.

12. If you have materials that you would like the interviewers to review, *do not* hand them out prior to the interview or during the interview. If you do this, the interviewers many times will be reading your handout materials rather than paying attention to what is being discussed during the interview.

13. At the end, make certain to express your gratitude for being asked to interview.

14. At the very end, provide an additional copy of your résumé to each person conducting the interview. This will probably be taken home and will remind them of you when they think about a final employment decision. This is especially important if you were fortunate enough to obtain the final interview.

15. Throughout the entire interview, respond with sincerity, tact, and a high degree of interest.

16. Do *active listening*. That is, pay attention to the emotional tone of the interviewer, not just the words she or he utters.

17. Most important, throughout the entire interview situation, display life, pep, enthusiasm—let your personality shine—and display zest and high interest for the job for which you are interviewing.

A final recommendation is that you attempt to obtain the final interview if multiple candidates are being interviewed. This has the following advantages: (a) You will be the last person the interviewers will see and the last contact in their memories; (b) if the interviewers are not experienced, they will become accustomed to the process and be much more at ease when your turn comes to be interviewed; and (c) if you can have a friend or someone you know observe the prior interviews and provide you with feedback, you will have attained much valuable information that will assist you when you are interviewed.

FOLLOWING THROUGH AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Once your interview has been completed and you have returned home, don't forget to follow through with the interviewers. Write a letter of thanks, and inform the interviewers that you would very much like to serve in the administrative position they have announced. Also, if you have picked up on areas of specific interest to a certain member of the interview team, try to find interesting information about that subject and send it to that person. Also, include a note that indicates your high degree of mutual interest in that specific area.

The advantages of this approach are that (a) it shows courtesy and the fact that you appreciated the interview, (b) it allows you a final chance to impress the individual interviewers, and (c) it gives them a final contact that makes you memorable with the interviewers.

SUCCESSFUL HINTS

Some of the major successful hints that were incorporated in the text of this chapter are worthy of review.

- Do your homework! Do your homework! Do your homework!
- Make certain that the needs identified by the school district are an excellent fit with your needs, your skills, and your experiences.
- Have your friends and/or colleagues put you through a series of realistic simulated interviews.
- Visit the school district, incognito, in advance of the interview date, and take this time to talk to a variety of persons who live and work in the school district.
- Dress appropriately for your interview.
- Realize that in all situations you face, from the moment you enter the district to the moment you leave the district, you are in an interview situation; this is true even over a relaxed meal.
- At the end of the interview, use the time provided for you to question the interviewer to stress why you want that specific administrative position in that specific district and stress the strengths that you will bring to the job.
- Be certain to follow through after the interview with a thank-you letter and with specific helpful information mailed to interviewers who appear to possess a particular area of high interest.
- Finally, be certain throughout the entire interview situation that you display a high degree of interest in the position and a high level of energy, sincerity, knowledge, tact, and enthusiasm.

EXERCISES

If you complete the following reflective exercises, you will make certain that you have not missed any important preparation points.

1. I have located and used the following sources of information:

a. University professors

(1)
(2)
(3)
etc.

b. My university placement offices

(1)
(2)
etc.

c. Professional consulting firms

(1)
(2)
(3)

2. I might face the following types of interview situations:

a.
b.
c.
etc.

3. The following friends and/or colleagues would be willing to assist me in my interview preparation by presenting me with mock interview situations in which they will interrogate me with the most difficult and most comprehensive set of questions:

a.
b.
c.
etc.

4. I have decided to go incognito prior to my scheduled interview date and visit the following places, and talk to the following categories of people, to obtain their perceptions of the quality of the schools and school districts.

a.
b.
c.
etc.

5. During my interview, I am determined to do and display the following activities and characteristics:

a.
b.
c.
etc.

6. After I have completed my interview and returned home, I will do the following:

a.
b.
c.
etc.

5

Negotiating Your Employment Conditions

Chapter 5 deals with the area of formal or informal negotiations of your contract. The topics covered include (a) duties and responsibilities of the position, or your job description, (b) length of contract year, (c) number of years of the contract, (d) salary determination, (e) fringe benefits, (f) contract example and analysis (including costing out the total package), and (g) hiring a lawyer to negotiate your contract conditions. The chapter ends with a series of successful hints and with some reflective exercises.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POSITION, OR YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION

One of the first issues you should try to investigate is the specifics of your duties and responsibilities. In many cases, a written job description will be available; but often these list so many items that it is impossible to determine which items are the crucial ones and which are tasks that are not crucial. It is also important to find out which tasks and responsibilities will be used to evaluate

your performance, because your salary advancement, your position advancement, and your future employment may depend on the qualitative level at which you perform them.

Whether or not the district provides you with a written job description, you should discuss those specific duties and responsibilities upon which your performance will be judged. As you move through your administrative career, you will experience situations where there is no written job description, and you will also experience situations where a comprehensive job description is provided that includes up to 100 responsibility tasks.

As an example, if you have accepted an assistant principalship, it is important to discover and negotiate, if necessary, the CSFs (Critical Success Factors). CSFs are those six to eight items that must be performed with maximum competency. For instance, assistant principals are sometimes used primarily as disciplinarians; at other times, their primary duties might revolve around teacher supervision, athletic and co-curricular management, housekeeping duties, or as a general backup for the principal in all areas of responsibility. Knowing the primary functions becomes a key to successful performance, and clarifying the primary functions upon which your performance is to be evaluated is important to you. Obviously, other matters can be added *by exception*, but these should not be used by your supervising administrator in evaluating your administrative importance. Also, if for some reason some responsibility of great importance arises, it can later be added to your list of Critical Success Factors.

Let's explore this topic of Critical Success Factors in more detail. We can best do this by providing examples of a few administrative job descriptions using the CSFs technique.

These positions include (a) a middle school principal, (b) a central office curriculum coordinator, (c) a director of personnel, and (d) an assistant superintendent for business affairs.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR JOB DESCRIPTION EXAMPLES

Example 1: A Middle School Principal's CSFs

- To monitor student achievement and to work with the teachers and central office specialist to improve achievement in areas where the student body or subgroups of students are performing below expected levels

- To perform curricular audits, that is, monitoring to ensure that what is in the curriculum is what is actually taught and that it is the information and performance outcomes for which the students are tested
- To arrange for staff development activities to upgrade the knowledge of the teachers and the techniques used by them
- To successfully operate as a member of the site-based management community
- To operate within the human, financial, temporal, and other resources provided
- To successfully initiate a two-way, open communication structure with your school's community residents, with the other school district's building-level and central-level administrators, and with the superintendent of schools

Example 2: A Central Office Curriculum Coordinator's CSFs

- To conduct annual curriculum audits
- To collect information about new curriculum trends and to disseminate said information to the professional staff
- To organize planning committees to upgrade the curricular offerings when needed and to do this with each curricular area at least once in every 5-year period
- To provide yearly status reports to the superintendent and the board of education
- To recommend areas of staff development that should be offered to the teaching and administrative staffs
- To present the superintendent and the board of education with an annual budget proposal and with factual background information validating the financial amounts requested
- To monitor and control the budgetary expenditures to ensure that they do not exceed the amount of money relegated to the curricular development function

Example 3: A Director of Personnel's CSFs

- To locate, screen, interview, and recommend employment of the most favorable candidates for employment to vacancies that exist in the school district
- To organize various employee screening committees to assist in the selection process
- To directly work with the principals and other administrative directors to agree on the placement of the new hirees
- To maintain a comprehensive employees' record system that includes all legally required personnel records and those required by the board of education and/or the superintendent of schools
- To serve as the school district's chief negotiator during times of negotiation of master employee unions' contracts

- To provide the superintendent and the board of education with an annual report of all activities of the personnel operation and to make any recommendations for improvement to the personnel functions

Example 4: An Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs' CSFs

- To oversee the development and monitoring of all budgetary matters
- To supervise all purchasing matters
- To serve as the monitor of any construction projects within the school district
- To investigate all of the district's fund balances and temporarily idle funds so that the greatest amount of interest will be made while financial security will be ensured
- To develop a comprehensive, updated risk-management program
- To provide overview monitoring of the transportation, food service, custodial, and maintenance functions
- To maintain the financial records and audit procedures that will assure that the district makes expenditures within its available budgetary funds and in a manner that is both legal and responsible

Now that you have discovered the main performance areas for which you can be held accountable, it is important to negotiate the length of your contract work year.

LENGTH OF CONTRACT YEAR

Sometimes the school district will have a specific contract year for each category of administrator, but there are times when the length of your administrative work year is flexible. It is important to determine the length of your work year before agreeing to a contract or accepting the job. For example, if you are offered a principalship that pays $60,000 for 12 months of employment, you might have a financial advantage by taking one that pays $52,000 for 10 months of employment.

In general, school district contracts for every administrative position, except those of superintendent, associate superintendent, and assistant superintendent, vary between 10-month, 11-month, and 12-month appointments. Sometimes, the time frame is expressed in days, such as 200 days, 220 days, or 230 days.

Once you have determined the length of your work year, you next have to obtain agreement on the length of the contract you will sign.

NUMBER OF YEARS OF THE CONTRACT

For many positions, the contract covers only 1 year, but, in others, the contract period can vary from 1 year to 5 years. The length of your contract will be determined by three factors: (a) state law, which may require a legal time length that will control your administrative contract; (b) local school board policy; or (c) the length of flexibility allowed by the local school board.

In most cases, the superintendent's position is a 52-week position, with a stipulated number of paid vacation days included within the time frame. Although certain states and certain local school districts only permit 1-year contracts to be tendered, most allow contract lengths of 3 to 5 years. Negotiating this condition of employment is important, as a multiple-year contract provides one with security over a stipulated time period. This is crucial if major changes are to be made to the manner in which the school district manages its programs and affairs.

Not only are the length of contract year and the number of years allowed by the contract important, the salary paid is also a very important area for negotiations.

SALARY DETERMINATION

Many school districts provide a step salary schedule or a salary range for assistant principals, principals, and many central office positions. Usually, the initial amount of salary is negotiable, even when a salary schedule is based upon the years of experience of the employee. This is an important negotiation stage, because if your initial salary is low, it will take you many years to reach a maximum salary; whereas, if you can negotiate a high entry salary, you will gain a significant amount in salary each year that you work for that specific school district.

As an aside, it is usually possible to negotiate for a one-time payment of moving expenses, regardless of the administrative position you accept. Moving is a very expensive matter, and, unless it is paid by the employing school district, it may take you 2 or 3 years to recoup losses even when it looks as though your higher paid position is of immediate financial advantage.

FRINGE BENEFIT PACKAGE AND OTHER IMPORTANT CONTRACT PROVISIONS

Once your salary level is determined, it is important to determine the number, types, and amount of dollars that will be spent on your fringe benefit package. Most districts have a set fringe benefit package for administrative positions. However, usually the superintendent of schools, and often assistant superintendents, have an enriched fringe package.

The possible areas of fringe benefits and other important provisions that can be discussed and/or negotiated include the following:

- All health insurance provisions
- All security provisions
- All contract term provisions
- All duties and responsibilities of the employee
- All responsibilities of the employing institution
- All provisions that are activated at termination of the contract
- All freedoms of the employee to perform activities not related to the specific job assignment
- Other specific conditions that should be included, depending upon the specific job assumed and the specific desires of the individual administrative employee

CONTRACT EXAMPLE AND ANALYSIS (INCLUDING COSTING OUT THE TOTAL PACKAGE)

I am presenting a copy of one of my last superintendent's contracts, but without salary and fringe benefit figures. The actual contract that I (not a lawyer) negotiated is duplicated below. However, the school district's name is omitted to protect its confidentiality.

Author's Actual Superintendent's Employment Contract

AGREEMENT made this 24th day of June, 19___, by and between JERRY J. HERMAN, hereinafter referred to as the "SUPERINTENDENT" and the BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ___ SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE CITY OF ___, COUNTY OF _____, _____, hereinafter referred to as the "BOARD."

WHEREAS, the SUPERINTENDENT is desirous of performing the duties of the superintendent of schools for the BOARD, and

WHEREAS, the BOARD is desirous of employing the SUPERINTENDENT as Superintendent of Schools pursuant to the authority granted under Section 1711 of the Education Law, and

WHEREAS, the SUPERINTENDENT has agreed to accept such employment.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is agreed as follows:

1. *EMPLOYMENT*: The BOARD hereby employs the SUPERINTENDENT and the SUPERINTENDENT hereby agrees to serve the BOARD as SUPERINTENDENT for a three-year period commencing on July 1, 19___, and ending June 30, 19___.

2. *RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERINTENDENT*: The primary activity of the School District is the education of the students for whom the District is responsible. The SUPERINTENDENT is hereby employed by the BOARD in a "*nondelegable*" capacity as the educational leader of the School District. As such, the main job of the SUPERINTENDENT is to implement ways of enhancing student educational achievement and making effective and efficient use of personnel, facilities, and financial resources.

(a) As the educational leader of the District, the SUPERINTENDENT is responsible for:

(1) Assessing the educational needs of the students as they may vary from time to time and recommending to the BOARD educational goals for the District which will best satisfy those needs.

(2) Developing courses of study or curriculum suited to meet the educational goals established by the BOARD and causing such courses of study and curriculum to be used in the grades, classes, and schools for which they are authorized.

(3) Creating and maintaining an environment conductive to learning in the various schools of the District.

(4) *Hiring*, training, and motivating administrative and teaching staffs to implement those courses of study and curriculum and motivating students to achieve their educational potential.

(5) Regularly assessing the degree to which the educational goals of the DISTRICT have been achieved and reporting the results of such assessments to the BOARD, and recommending to the BOARD the courses of action to be taken when the goals are not being achieved and implementing such courses of action as are approved by the BOARD.

(b) The SUPERINTENDENT shall also be responsible for the successful operation of the noneducational or service functions of the School District. The leadership of these areas is "*delegable*" but the SUPERINTENDENT shall be directly accountable and responsible for the selection and recommendation of competent persons to whom to delegate such leadership, and for the effective management of the personnel, facilities, and financial resources of the DISTRICT by such persons.

(c) The SUPERINTENDENT shall act as the chief executive officer of the BOARD as well as the chief educational leader of the DISTRICT. In such capacities, it shall be his duty to provide the BOARD with recommendations based upon his best professional judgment as educational leader. To assist himself in reaching such professional judgments, the SUPERINTENDENT shall have the further duty to "*select and recommend*" to the BOARD the *most competent administrative assistants* that he can find.

(d) In executing any and all of his responsibilities, it shall be the duty of the SUPERINTENDENT to make *maximum use of resources outside the District.* It is understood that all of the above responsibilities shall be carried out by the SUPERINTENDENT within his ability to do so giving due regard to the financial resources and facilities made available to him by the BOARD with which to carry out such responsibilities.

3. *POWERS AND DUTIES*: The SUPERINTENDENT is to have the powers and is charged with the duties as set forth in Subdivision 5 of Section 1711 of the Education Law except as modified by the responsibilities set forth in Paragraph 2 above. In addition, the SUPERINTENDENT shall have such powers and perform such duties as have been customary for Superintendents of School in general in the State of ____, except as specifically modified above.

4. *COMPENSATION*: For his services as Superintendent of School and for all services rendered as Superintendent of Schools, the SUPERINTENDENT shall be reimbursed at the rate of _____ per year for the period of this Agreement.

In January of each year of the contract, the BOARD shall review with the SUPERINTENDENT the performance of his responsibilities during the prior school year, and based upon this evaluation of the SUPERINTENDENT'S performance, the parties may agree upon an increase in such compensation in subsequent contract years.

5. *BENEFITS*:

(a) The SUPERINTENDENT shall receive four (4) weeks paid vacation per year, and upon termination of his employment with the District he *shall be paid* for any *unused vacation* days.

(b) The SUPERINTENDENT shall receive *travel and conference* time, and district paid expenses for such.

(c) In addition, the SUPERINTENDENT shall receive those of the *following benefits* which he shall choose up to an aggregate cost to the School District not to exceed _____ per year:

(1) Basic Family Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Major Medical and Dental Coverage;

(2) In addition to (1) above, a plan for one hundred percent (100%) reimbursement for medical and dental expenses up to an aggregate total of _____ per year covering SUPERINTENDENT and his immediate family.

(3) Fifty Thousand Dollars ($50,000.00) of "Universal Life" insurance with the premium paid by the District. In addition the SUPERINTENDENT can purchase up to Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($500,000.00) of group term insurance by reimbursing the District for the amount of the premiums paid.

(4) Supplemental disability insurance;

(5) Professional dues; and

(6) The use of a school district-owned automobile, including fuel and maintenance thereof, or at the option of the SUPERINTENDENT, mileage reimbursement at the rate of _____ per mile for use of his own vehicle.

For the purpose of calculating the aggregate cost per year, it is agreed that the value of the use of a school district-owned automobile, if chosen, shall be _____ per year. It is also agreed that reimbursement for the use of his own vehicle shall not exceed _____ per year.

(d) In addition to the above listed benefits, the SUPERINTENDENT shall be entitled to such other benefits not listed above as are granted to School District administrative employees in accordance with the policies and practices of the BOARD as amended from time to time, and specifically sick leave benefits as modified herein. The sick leave benefits available to administrators above shall be provided with up to sixty *(60) days paid sick leave per year* during the term of this contract.

7. *TERMINATION FOR CAUSE*: The BOARD reserves the right to terminate this contract upon ten (10) days written notice to the SUPERINTENDENT:

(a) for cause as provided in and pursuant to Section 306 of the Education Law of the State of ____.

(b) if the SUPERINTENDENT shall become mentally or physically incapacitated to such an extent as to prevent him from properly performing any and all of the duties of his office;

(c) if after due notice and hearing before the BOARD, the SUPERINTENDENT shall be found to be guilty of failure to follow established BOARD policy or incompetency.

(d) if the SUPERINTENDENT shall be convicted of a crime, or after notice and hearing before the BOARD, shall be found to be guilty of immoral conduct.

8. *MEDICAL EXAMINATION*: The SUPERINTENDENT hereby agrees to have a comprehensive medical examination during the first six months of this Agreement, and once every other year thereafter. The results of such examination shall be filed with the Secretary of the Board of Education and shall be available for review only by members of the Board of Education. The *cost* of such examination shall be borne by the School District.

9. *CONDITION*: It is understood that this Agreement is conditional upon the SUPERINTENDENT having or obtaining a superintendent's certificate from the Commissioner of Education of the State of ____ on or before January 1, 19___.

10. *MISCELLANEOUS:*

(a) The SUPERINTENDENT agrees that, prior to July 1, 19___, he will not, without prior BOARD approval, interview for other full-time employment and that a violation of this provision shall be cause for termination of this contract by the BOARD.

(b) The SUPERINTENDENT shall have the right to carry over ten (10) unused vacation days each year into an accumulated amount of *unused vacation days* to be *paid at his daily rate* upon leaving the school district. He also shall be paid at his daily rate for any *unused sick leave days* he has not used.

(c) The BOARD hereby grants *permission* to the SUPERINTENDENT *to use educational and statistical information* acquired in the performance of his duties in any publications he might make, provided such information would be available under Article 6 of the Freedom of Information Law.

(d) The BOARD hereby grants *permission* to the SUPERINTENDENT to teach as an *adjunct professor* at a college or university and to perform as a *consultant* outside of the School District, providing that such activities do not interfere with the quality of the SUPERINTENDENT's performance for the School District.

(e) The School district *shall save harmless and protect* the SUPERINTENDENT from financial loss arising out of any claim, demand, suit, or judgment by reason of alleged negligence or other act resulting in accidental bodily injury to any person or accidental damage to the property of any person while acting in the discharge of his duties, within the scope of his employment and/or under the direction of the BOARD, provided the SUPERINTENDENT deliver the original and a copy of any summons, complaint, process, notice, demand, or pleading to the BOARD within ten (10) days from the time he is served with such.

(f) If this contract should be terminated by the BOARD other than for reasons set forth in paragraphs 7 and 10, the SUPERINTENDENT shall be entitled to payment for any unused vacation and sick leave days and, in addition, it is agreed that payment of one-half of the base salary at the time of termination, prorated for the balance of the contract period, shall be accepted by the SUPERINTENDENT in lieu of all claims for damages whatsoever which the SUPERINTENDENT may have against the BOARD arising out of his employment and/or the termination of this contract. If this contract should be terminated by the SUPERINTENDENT before its expiration, the SUPERINTENDENT shall forfeit any accumulated vacation days and any unused sick leave days which have been carried forward.

(g) The BOARD shall allow the SUPERINTENDENT to purchase by salary deductions tax sheltered annuities to the full extent permitted by the Internal Revenue Code as amended from time to time.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have hereunto set their hands and seals the day first above written.

_____

JERRY J. HERMAN (SIGNED)

BOARD OF EDUCATION, _____ SCHOOL DISTRICT, COUNTY OF _____, _____.

_____

BOARD PRESIDENT (SIGNED)

BOARD MEMBERS (SIGNED)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

As it was my intention to go into university work upon completing the initial 3-year contract, I should note that, if I intended to continue as a superintendent beyond the initial contractual period, I would have added the following:

For my payoff, if the board of education terminated me before the contract expiration date, I would have negotiated language that committed the district to pay me my full salary and full benefit values for the length of time remaining on my contract.

I would have negotiated language that stated, if the board of education did not act on a contract extension prior to a 1-year expiration date of my current contract, my contract would automatically be extended for an additional 3 years.

I would attempt to negotiate and add the following protective language to my employment contract: "In the event that said SUPERINTENDENT be dismissed or otherwise removed from such position prior to the expiration of the employment contract, the sum equal to two year's salary and fringe benefit costs shall become immediately due and payable, without mitigation, to said SUPERINTENDENT from the school district as liquidated damages for breach of said contract by the school district's BOARD OF EDUCATION."

This section ends with some major points that should be emphasized from my superintendent's employment contract reproduced above.

- The package cost of the first year of the above contract would increase yearly, and it would be greatly increased by payment of unused sick leave and vacation days upon leaving employment with the school district. In addition, the board of education paid all of my retirement contributions to the State's Employee Retirement System.
- Throughout my entire professional career, I have always been an author and served as a consultant. This contract language allows me to perform those activities, and it also gives me permission to use information that was developed while I served as superintendent of the school district.
- The language held me legally harmless and would pay for any legal matter in which I became involved while performing my official duties as the superintendent of schools.
- The language prohibits the board of education from assigning me to any position other than the superintendent of schools for the district.
- The language clearly gives me the authority to hire the teaching and administrative personnel that I desire.
- The contract emphasizes that my major focus will be that of instruction of students.
- The contract allows me to delegate those functions that are noneducational in nature, even though I will be ultimately responsible for monitoring those functions.
- It allows me a generous amount to be expended on those fringe benefits of my choice.
- The contract language ensures that I will be the highest-paid total contract worth employee and that I will automatically receive any fringe benefit increases granted to any administrative employee or granted through master administrative union's collective bargaining agreement with the board of education.
- Because the purchase of a *universal life insurance* policy worth $50,000 has a yearly premium of approximately 30 times the yearly premium of a $50,000 term life, and because a policy of $50,000 does not have to be claimed as income, it is very clear that this provision is much to my advantage. In addition, a universal life insurance policy places the major part of the premium into an interest-earning account, which serves almost as a tax-sheltered IRA, so the net worth of my investment increased rapidly.

- By allowing me to purchase less expensive term life insurance, I also did not have to claim this as income while obtaining the advantages of a large amount of life insurance at a minimum cost.
- The contract permitted me to tax shelter my income, to the maximum amount allowed by law, by investing in a tax-sheltered annuity(ies) of my choice.

HIRING A LAWYER TO NEGOTIATE YOUR CONTRACT

It is unusual for an administrator below the administrative level of superintendent to hire a lawyer to negotiate an employment contract with a board of education. However, I know some superintendents who have successfully hired lawyers and have been very satisfied with the contractual results achieved.

There are clearly advantages and disadvantages to hiring a lawyer to negotiate your contract with the school district's board of education, which include the following:

Main Advantages

- An experienced lawyer can probably do a better job of obtaining an enriched set of contract conditions than that which can be negotiated by an inexperienced superintendent or administrator.
- If the employer becomes upset with the progress or context of the negotiations, the negative attitude will be directed toward your attorney—not toward you. In such cases, you may also choose to replace your attorney and to personally enter the negotiations with your potential employer.

Disadvantages

- Using a lawyer to negotiate your employment contract can be a very expensive process. The type of payment agreement you can negotiate may include one of the following: (a) an hourly fee, plus expenses; (b) a percentage of your first year's contractual salary; or (c) although a rare occurrence, you can sometimes negotiate with an attorney to obtain your employment contract for an agreed-upon flat fee.

- An hourly fee, plus expenses, may be very costly, as there is no limit to the number of hours the lawyer can take to reach final agreement on your employment contract. Also, the advantage or disadvantage of paying the attorney a percentage of your first year's contract depends on the percentage agreed upon and upon the total dollars of the first year's contractual salary.
- If the school board also employs an attorney to negotiate your employment contract, and, especially when the two attorneys are personal acquaintances or friends, they may agree to your contract conditions over a drink or over lunch. Sometimes this will result in contractual positions that are not in your best interest.

Now that the importance of negotiating your duties and responsibilities, and your contract provisions, has been reviewed, it is time to turn to those hints that will assist in making your entry into a new administrative position most effective and efficient.

SUCCESSFUL HINTS

- If there is not a written job description available, or if the written job description includes a multitude of specific duties and responsibilities, attempt to negotiate those six to eight CSFs (Critical Success Factors) that will be used to evaluate the quality of your administrative performance. Of course, if some important duty or responsibility has been omitted, this can be added later. All other tasks should not become part of your official performance evaluation structure, even though both you and your supervisor understand that they have to be done.
- The length of your work year, the number of years stipulated in your contract, your salary provision, and the amount and type of fringe benefits provided you are all important matters to be discussed and negotiated.
- If you are an inexperienced administrator, or if you feel that you are not capable of negotiating a contractual agreement that is most favorable to you, you may wish to hire legal counsel to negotiate your employment contract with the school district.

EXERCISES

List those CSFs (Critical Success Factors) below that you believe should be included in your job description and that will be used to evaluate your administrative performance.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Assuming that you have been offered the position of the superintendent of schools in a school district, what specific very important provisions would you want included in your contract? List them below:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Considering your personal ability and confidence level, do you intend to negotiate your employment contract or would you hire an attorney to negotiate it for you? If you were to hire an attorney to negotiate it, what would you perceive to be the advantages and/or disadvantages of using this approach to your contract negotiation? List them below.

Advantages:	**Disadvantages:**
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
etc.	etc.

6

Preparing for Your Next Administrative Position

Chapter 6 discusses those topics that are important when you are currently in possession of an administrative position but, for one reason or another, you wish to move to another administrative position. The topics covered include (a) doing a bang-up job in your current administrative position, (b) hitching your wagon to a rising star, (c) making yourself highly visible (write articles for professional journals, attend professional conferences, attend local, regional, state, and national workshops), (d) broadening your communication network, (e) developing a "key" communicator professional network (those persons who have similar desires), and (f) keeping your eyes and ears open to potential opportunities. The chapter ends with a series of successful hints and with some reflective exercises.

DOING A BANG-UP JOB IN YOUR CURRENT ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION

If you have spent a few years in your first administrative position, or if you are desirous of making a change, or if you wish

to move up the administrative ladder, it is very important that you create an excellent reputation in your current position by providing outstanding service and by performing at a very high level. Nothing will impress those persons considering you for advancement or movement to a better educational administration position more than your excellent reputation as a winner in your current administrative position.

Of course, the number of years that you have spent in your current administrative position—not too few and not too many—may have a bearing on your ability to obtain a new position. In some cases, you may be ruled out of contention for a new administrative position if you have served just a year or two in your present position. On the other hand, you may be ruled out for promotion because you have spent 15 or 20 years, for example, as an assistant principal.

Although it is possible to move quickly, the two scenarios above are most often true. If you leave your current position too soon, your dedication may be questioned and your reason for leaving your current position may be suspect. On the other hand, if you spend many years in an entry-level administrative position, potential future employers may wonder why you have not advanced in your administrative positions after the many years you have been in the business.

If given an opportunity to explain your reasons in either of these scenarios, it is possible to overcome some doubts that are held by the potential future employers. However, you may not be given the opportunity to explain your reasons and therefore it is important, if you intend to change administrative positions or to climb the administrative ladder in the future, that you seriously consider the length of time you intend to stay and produce well in your current position before you begin your new job search.

HITCHING YOUR WAGON TO A RISING STAR

One of the best ways to ensure that you move quickly up the administrative ladder is to begin your career with a highly visible and highly respected supervising administrator. Also, it is wise, if you work in a district that has this type of assistant superintendent or superintendent of schools, to volunteer to do extra assignments to assist that individual and to ask if that person would be willing

to mentor you so that you move your administrative career ahead quickly. Make certain that you tell her or him that you are impressed by her or his reputation in the field and that you wish to learn from the best.

Of course, working with a rising star is not only a good strategy for beginning administrators, it is also a wise strategy for anyone in an administrative position who wishes to move to the next highest administrative position. What will hitching your future to a rising star do for you? Here are some of the main advantages of using this strategy:

- If the person is an excellent performer, you can learn a great deal that will assist you in your present and future administrative positions.
- Most excellent administrators are the type that are willing to mentor and assist hardworking, dedicated, and potentially strong administrators who are beneath their level on the administrative ladder.
- Often, if you ask them to do so, they will take you to gatherings of potential future employers and will introduce you to such individuals.
- They will be alerted through their networks about administrative positions that are vacant and those in which you may be interested, and they will notify you of these administrative employment opportunities.
- They will allow you, or they may even take you with them, to make presentations at and attend state, regional, and national-level conferences and workshops where you can increase your personal network contacts.
- They will be cheerleaders for you to other school districts' decision makers, and they will serve as primary positive referents when potential employers investigate you.
- They will probably have many job offers by other school districts. These will be positions in large responsibility areas, positions in larger school districts, positions in more prestigious school districts, or promotions to a higher visibility and more prestigious position. In any of these cases, there is an excellent chance that, if you have camaraderie with her or him and have performed in an excellent manner in your current administrative position, she or he will take you along when leaving to accept the new position. In most cases, this will also advance your career.

It is not unusual for an excellent principal to be brought in by a high-visibility administrator/mentor to a position in central office administration. Also, it is not unusual for school districts to seek out excellent assistant superintendents who work for highly visible and well-respected superintendents to become the new superintendents of their school districts.

In addition to hitching your wagon to a rising star, there are other means of enhancing your chances of advancement up the administrative ladder.

MAKING YOURSELF HIGHLY VISIBLE

Networking is another of today's keys to attaining the administrative position you desire. This is true in business as well as in education. A strategy that will increase your visibility and your number of networks is one that is well worth your time to pursue. Obviously, you should form networks and make contacts with your local administrator colleagues and, if possible, with local area board of education members. However, those contacts are not sufficient for the administrator who wishes to move quickly and efficiently into higher and higher administrative responsibilities. Some of the best people contacts—and thus networking possibilities—are those mentioned below. The advantages of each contact will be stressed.

Writing Articles

Writing articles for and being published in professional journals that are frequently read by administrators and school board members may not get you an administrative position but it will provide you with the advantage of name recognition. It will also stand out on the résumé you submit to a possible future employer, and it will provide a dimension of expertise that is uncommon in the résumé of most candidates for the position. Remember, your initial contact with a potential future employer will probably be through the information you provide on paper. Anything that you can honestly use to separate you from the crowd is a point in your one-upmanship strategy. Obviously, if you have the skills and desire to write a book on an administrative or instructional subject,

you will further distinguish yourself from the mass of candidates who have applied for the vacant administrative position.

However, I must insert a word of caution at this juncture. If you are a prolific author, and if you have had many journal articles and numerous books published, you may hurt yourself when seeking an administrative position in a school district. With the exception of prestigious districts that have a highly educated board of education and community, the school district's decision makers may perceive you as being a theoretical "egghead" who couldn't possibly perform in the field and who might be better placed at a university.

Conferences

Attending. By attending conferences and using your time at them to make contacts with other administrators and potential employers across the nation, you will increase your people networks. It is important that you follow up the conferences with regular contact with those persons with whom you have made a connection and from whom you may receive assistance in your administrative position searches in the future. These opportunities present themselves at the regional, state, and national levels; make certain that you take advantage of as many of them as you can.

Also, at many administrator or board of education state or national conferences, school districts interview candidates for vacant administrative positions. In addition, many of the professional headhunters attend these conferences to keep themselves and their firms in the minds of school districts' decision makers who may employ them to conduct an administrative position search in the future.

At the conference, if some district decision makers are talking to potential administrative candidates, and if the jobs that are posted are ones in which you have a high level of interest, try to get placed on the initial exploratory interview schedule of those districts in which you have an interest. Even if nothing comes of the interviews at this time, you have made contacts and put yourself in a position to apply for future job openings in those school districts. This is a particularly wise use of your time at a conference, as you can have preliminary job interviews with numerous school districts in a very short period of time.

On the other hand, when professional headhunters are in attendance at a conference, attempt to set up a time with them to

introduce yourself and to tell them of your present position and your future interests in administration. Also, follow through on this contact by writing them a thank-you letter and again emphasizing your future administrative desires. Of course, enclose a copy of your résumé for their review, and ask them to contact you if a position in which you are interested comes open. Also, an occasional phone call to remind them of who you are, where you first met them personally, and your future administrative desires is a good idea, and you can once again request that they assist you in your job searches.

These contacts are particularly helpful for women and minority candidates. Many of the consulting firms have an undersupply of these categories of candidates; and certain school districts, even though the job search is supposed to be open and nondiscriminatory, really want a specific type of candidate to fill their administrative vacancy.

Presenting. Presenting at conferences brings benefits that cannot be obtained by merely attending them. When you are a presenter at conferences where future potential employers are present, it gives you the advantage of being seen as a person who possesses expertise about the topic you are presenting. This impresses those persons in attendance; and, many times, some people in attendance will stop after your presentation to obtain more information from you or will ask you to come to their school district to present your program. In any case, take down the names, addresses, and phone numbers of these individuals, as they may become excellent future networking contacts for you.

Again, listing the conference presentations you have made on your résumé can assist you in standing out from the crowd of other candidates. This evidence of professional expertise can be helpful when trying to obtain an administrative position in which you are interested.

Workshops

Attending. Attending workshops usually provides advantages that are not present when attending conferences. Many times these workshops last for many days, and there are usually a limited number of participants who are together for many hours each day.

The advantage of this contact opportunity is that you can really get to know the others in attendance quite well. Some of them may

be in a position to make employment decisions for their school districts; others may be persons who hold an administrative title that is more advanced than yours, and they may be interested in getting you into their school district as an administrator sometime in the future; others may be in a position similar to yours and may excellent candidates for a *self-help network*, where all members assist the other members in locating and obtaining the administrative positions each member desires.

The self-help networks that you establish are very important, because you will have others actively working for you that you can use as positive references when you apply for an administrative position, and you may be able to assist someone who will move ahead in administration and who may bring you into her or his district as an administrator when the opportunity presents itself.

Presenting. Presenting at a workshop provides you with much visibility to a smaller number of participants than you will contact at a conference. This presents an opportunity for you to gain prestige for your expertise and to impress those persons in attendance; it provides you with the opportunity to have concentrated and extended discussions with the participants; it usually provides you with an opportunity to meet with individuals for evening meals and other informal activities; and it provides you with the chance to make your future administrative desires known to many persons who may assist you in your future job searches.

It also may provide you with opportunities to present your workshops in the school districts of some of the participants; and, if this is the case, it will enhance your chances of obtaining a future administrative position in those districts. Again, a listing of school districts where you have presented a professional workshop will be impressive on your résumé and will set you apart, again, from the crowd of applicants for the position in which you are interested.

BROADENING YOUR COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Obviously, your primary networks will consist of those persons and groups that are currently in the field of educational administration. However, their are four other networking possibilities that should not be overlooked. These possibilities include the following:

- Recently retired administrators with whom you are acquainted may be helpful. Many of these recently retired administrators are in the high-visibility, high-prestige category, and they are usually willing to use their many contacts to assist an up-and-coming, high-potential administrator.
- Professional association leaders are another potentially strong networking possibility. Get to know these individuals personally and ask them to assist you by notifying you of administrative vacancies of which they are aware and by assisting you in obtaining the administrative positions you desire. These persons often are asked by school district decision makers to recommend candidates to fill vacant administrative positions.
- School board members with whom you are acquainted, or with whom you can become acquainted, provide another excellent networking possibility for you. These are key contacts, as they are usually the final decision makers regarding who is to be hired for higher-level administrative positions. Getting them in your network is of great advantage, not only because they will most times be primary decision makers on which administrative candidate is to be hired to fill the administrative vacancy that exists in their school district, but they also can be in a position to recommend you as a candidate to other board members from various school districts in the region, state, or nation.
- High-visibility and high-prestige college and university professors of administration with whom you are acquainted, or with whom you can become acquainted, provide an additional networking possibility. These individuals are important to include in your network. Often they are asked for recommendations on candidates to fill vacant administrative positions in school districts, so they usually know which administrative vacancies are available and which may soon become available, and, many times, they serve as paid job search consultants to school districts.
- It is important that you become acquainted with these professors, that you tell them of your experiences and interests, and that you ask them to assist you in obtaining the administrative positions in which you are interested. It is important that you maintain frequent person-to-person contact with these individual powerful professors.
- Finally, business, industrial, and powerful community leaders can sometimes be very influential in deciding who is to be hired in their school district, and many of these individuals have influence on decision making in other school districts as well. Although,

generally, these individuals will not be as strong a group of networking contacts, they can assist you if they are school board members or if they have influence with persons who are school board members in local school districts or in school districts across their state.

DEVELOPING A "KEY" COMMUNICATOR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK (THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE SIMILAR DESIRES)

Although it is very wise to gain entrance into all of the networks mentioned above, you can take one more important step in organizing a group that will be of maximum assistance in helping you obtain the administrative positions you desire. This important additional step is to create a *key communicators' network* for yourself. The membership in this network may consist of certain individuals from any of the networks that were identified above.

The membership in this key communicators' network should consist of two types of individuals: (a) those who will be willing to continually search out position vacancies in which you may be interested and who will be willing to serve as positive sources of reference for you and (b) those individuals who, like yourself, are looking for new administrative challenges and/or advanced administrative positions. The latter group agrees to locate administrative positions in which you may be interested, to serve as positive reference sources, and to continue to promote your candidacy whenever and wherever they can. This, indeed, may become your best support group and the one that offers the greatest opportunity of assisting you in conducting a successful administrative job search.

KEEPING YOUR EYES AND EARS OPEN TO POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Finally, you can participate in your self-help search by keeping your eyes and ears open to potential administrative job opportunities. Sometimes the rumor mill and idle conversations about which administrators may be moving or retiring provide your first clue to

potential future administrative positions in which you may have an interest.

It is important that you do not make inquiries until you are certain that a vacancy exists. But this advance knowledge may allow you to develop strategies that provide you with opportunities to become acquainted, in advance, with those individuals who are going to make the employment decisions. At the very least, it will give you an advance opportunity to develop background information about the district and the administrative position, and it will allow you to perfect your approach to candidacy as soon as the administrative vacancy is officially announced.

Now that we have talked about the various techniques that are available to you when you are searching for your next administrative position, let's review them by enumerating some successful hints.

SUCCESSFUL HINTS

- Create as many networks as you can, as these will provide you with positive contacts that can assist you in locating and obtaining the administrative positions that you desire.
- Develop a *key communicators' network*, consisting of selective individuals who will work consistently for you in your efforts to obtain the administrative positions of your choice. In addition, you may be able to return the favor by assisting them in obtaining the administrative positions of their choice. This self-help network can be a powerful aid in your job search.
- Hitching your wagon to a rising star is another excellent way of obtaining advancements in administration. These high-visibility, greatly respected individuals can be of great assistance in your job searches—especially if you are able to get them to agree to serve as your mentor.
- It is crucial that you have an excellent performance record in your previous and in your current administrative position as you attempt to obtain an advanced step on the educational administrative ladder. A misstep in your past will, in all probability, lessen your chance of being successful in your new job search.

EXERCISES

List the potential networks that you can tap into or create to assist you in your administrative job search.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List those specific individuals that might be helpful to you in creating a *key communicators' network.*

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List those *star administrators* with whom you may have a chance to work or who will agree to serve as mentors for you.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List those conferences and/or workshops that may be helpful for you to attend.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List those professional conferences and/or workshops where it may be possible for you to present a program.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List the titles of some journals in which you may be able to become a published author, and list the titles of articles you may feel competent to write. If you feel you can be a successful author of books, list the potential publishers and the potential topics for your books.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

7

Developing Your Entry Plan

Once you have been successful in your quest for a specific administrative position, it is wise to plan what you intend to do after receiving the position. Chapter 7 presents material related to this topic, discussing the following: (a) actions after being hired but prior to starting the job; (b) first week's actions, (c) first month's plan, (d) first 3 months' plan, (e) first 6 months' plan, and (f) end of the first year assessment. The chapter ends with a list of successful hints and with some reflective exercises.

ACTIONS AFTER BEING HIRED BUT PRIOR TO STARTING THE JOB

As soon as you have been hired for your new administrative position, it is wise for you to do the following—even before actually starting to work at the new district. These initial actions are particularly important when you are going to serve in a new position in a district where no one is acquainted with you.

These preliminary activities are crucial to a good start if you are accepting a position as a principal or as a superintendent of schools. When the *new person* changes the equation in a school or district where all employees feel comfortable with their previous

administrator, many times rumors will be spread as well as anxiety among employees and *war stories* about the new administrator.

It is important that you squelch rumors, allay fears, lessen anxieties, and eliminate untrue war stories as soon as you possibly can. Even before you appear on the scene, it is wise to take actions that will display to the employees that you are a dedicated professional educator who wishes to work with them to assist the school or school district to become the best it can be and to assure them that you are respectful of your predecessor and the traditions that exist in the school or school district. It is also helpful if you can assure them that you are not going to come in and immediately change everything that currently exists.

Some actions that you can take, prior to actually arriving on the scene, include the following:

- You can subscribe to the local newspapers that cover your new school district, which will enable you to see what is being reported about your school and/or school district prior to arriving there.
- You can ask the current principal and/or central administration to send you the curriculum guides, goal statements, reports, a background summary of each teacher and administrator, and any important planning documents or reports that have recently been distributed.
- If you are entering as a principal, you may ask for the names, backgrounds, addresses, and phone numbers of PTA leaders, teacher team leaders, and your school building's or district's union leaders. Having obtained this information, you can phone or write each person, introduce yourself, indicate your desire to work together to assist the students and employees, and offer the opportunity to contact you, prior to your arrival, for any matter in which they feel you could be of assistance to them. However, you must make certain that you are not doing things to upstage or undermine the current principal or to take controversial positions on any matter until you possess all the background facts necessary to make an intelligent recommendation or decision.

If you are accepting a new superintendent's position, you will also have a list of key persons that you can contact in advance of your arrival on the job. Some of the most important ones will be the district's board of education members, the community leaders, the district's PTA leadership, the employee unions' leadership, and the media sources that cover your school district.

- You can fly or drive to the school or school district and arrange to have an open invitation for anyone who wishes to come to a specified location to meet with you.
- You can fly or drive to your new school or school district and arrange for a meeting with employees and other leaders to hear you give a brief speech about your interests and experiences and then provide those in attendance with unlimited time to ask you any questions that they may have.
- You can provide all employees and board members with a short and easy-to-read *entry letter* that makes matters clear about why you have accepted the position, what your interests are, and what you are going to attempt to accomplish during your initial time on your new job. An example of such an entry letter that I forwarded to one of my school districts after I had accepted the position and agreed to a contract, but before I was to arrive on site, is provided below.

May 4, 19__

FELLOW EMPLOYEES AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

As it will be some time before I have the pleasure of meeting most of you, I thought you might like to know why I chose to come to the _____ School District, what some of my strong convictions and interests are, and what I plan to do during my first six months as the Superintendent of your school district.

There are three important reasons that I chose the _____ School District:

1. *It has a reputation as a fine school district,* which reflects well on the past efforts of employees, citizens, students, and board members. I also recall your school district's fine reputation from the time I previously served in another area of your state as the Superintendent of _____ School District.

2. *Most people I talked to when I visited your school district (prior to my being offered and accepting a contract) gave positive responses when I asked about the quality of the school district.* Without identifying my purpose or identity, I visited with many parents; residents; hotel employees;

realtors; and elementary, middle school, and senior high students. I visited numerous places of business, shopping malls, hotels, and restaurants to gather an overview of peoples' perceptions about the school district.

3. *There are many excellent programs in place, but there are future challenges to be collectively met* due to such phenomena as declining student enrollments in sections of the district while other sections are experiencing an increase in student enrollments and due to the multitude of national and statewide committees and study groups that have published recommendations about methods to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the schools of the nation and of your state. I determined that there were still challenges remaining in your district as I spent time listening to and discussing with representatives of parent advisory groups, union leaders, curriculum specialists, and building- and central-level administrators. I also read three years of board of education meeting minutes, all master union/management collective bargaining agreements, audits, budgets, committee reports, citizen and study group reports, job descriptions, organizational charts, studies of student achievement levels, studies of dropout rates, studies of the percentage of high school graduates that went on to advanced educational opportunities, and other important instructional reports. I visited some schools and some classrooms. Finally, I spent many hours with individual board members and with the board of education as a collective body. I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT I AM NOT THROUGH LISTENING AND LEARNING.

I believe that any high-quality school district is one where productivity (student and employee achievement) is blended in a manner such that concerns both for achievement and for people are at very high levels. This is my conviction; and, along with each of you, I hope we will attain and maintain the mission of educating students well in the basics, in enrichment areas, and in social behaviors.

My major areas of high interest are as follows:

1. Communication and service contracts with parents and with the community at large.

2. Implementation of research findings, such as those coming out of Effective Schools research.

3. Assessment of building-level school climates, including the areas of exhibited behavior, student and employee attitudes, and levels of student learning that are expected and demanded.

4. Planning structures that include short-term and long-term planning, including scanning for existing trends, forecasting into the future, vision development, mission and goal statements, outcome objectives, and rigorous evaluation methods. At the administrative level, this includes some form of outcome objectives that are tied to specific goals and to specific measurement methods of the levels of achievement.

5. Assessment of how well the elementary, middle school, and senior high instructional programs articulate with one another.

6. Investigation of the potential for Quality of Work Life and Quality Circles programs for employees. This is a cooperative labor/management *voluntary* approach to bettering the work environment within which we all work and teach. This approach, by design, excludes matters related to union/management master contract negotiations, grievance resolution procedures, and other matters that are more appropriately left to traditional labor/management structures that are already in place.

7. Assessment of the school district's reporting and marketing structures and capabilities.

Finally, I share with you my entry plan—what I expect to accomplish during my first six months as the new superintendent of your school district:

First, I will do whatever is necessary to maintain well the day-to-day operations of the district and to address any emergency situations that may arise.

Second, I will visit with, listen to, and discuss matters with many employees, parents, community people, students, and educators in other school districts.

Third, I will collect data that will serve as baseline information that can be used for comparison purposes as future achievement levels are assessed.

Fourth, I will investigate the potential for implementation of the programs I have previously mentioned.

Fifth, I will investigate the adequacy of all communication structures that are in place, but I will make no changes if these structures are currently open, accurate, and working well. It is important to all of us that all parties involved in any manner in this educational enterprise—parents, students, employees, and citizens—feel a sense of ownership and pride in their schools. The only method I know for accomplishing this is to have a great deal of honest communication and to allow for all to get positively involved with the schools and school district employees.

I eventually hope to impress each of you as a dedicated, hardworking educator who is concerned about both the people in the school district and the achievement outcomes of all of our efforts. I hope, also, to prove that I'm trustworthy, caring, and that I fully understand that ably superintending a school district is a group process, not the sole domain of the person who holds the title of superintendent of schools.

I wish you all a happy, productive, and successful school year ahead and I eagerly look forward to meeting you personally.

Yours sincerely,

Jerry J. Herman (signed)
Superintendent

FIRST WEEK'S ACTIONS

During the first week, it is wise to make a visit to every school building in the district and to spend time with each administrator. Of course, this could take less time than a week or it could take more time than that, depending on the size of the school district. In addition, it is important to meet with the individual board members, union leaders, and community leaders, as time permits. Probably the only actual work you will do in your office is that which you can accomplish during evening and weekend hours.

FIRST MONTH'S PLAN

During the first month you will probably be wise to continue spending the great majority of time visiting people and becoming better acquainted with the district's history, successes, and areas that require improvement. Broaden your personal contacts to include the media representative, the mayor and city council members, CEOs of businesses and industries in the area, presidents of colleges and universities in the area, school booster groups, and other superintendents in the region.

Again, continue to be visible in the school building(s) and add civic clubs to the organizations with which you spend time. To do these things, you should prepare to continue doing most of your office work in the evenings and on weekends. This pattern of accomplishing your office work will lessen after the first month on the job, but some of your time will continue to be thus spent until you arrive at a normal, routine schedule after approximately 3 months.

FIRST THREE MONTHS' PLAN

Although much of this pattern of time use will not continue for a principal after the first month on the job, a superintendent of any substantial size school district will probably continue this entry pattern of time use during the first 3 months on the job. After the first 3 months, your work routine should become uniform and normal, and a great deal more time can be spent doing the work of your office during the regular schooldays.

I suggest, however, that during this get-acquainted and exploratory period, employees and the board of education may be wondering what you are doing, what contacts you are making, what you are observing, and what you are thinking. Don't keep them guessing: Develop a systematic method of briefly reporting which bases you have touched and what you have perceived.

I have found it very helpful to develop a brief printed summary of my activities and thoughts as I learned about the people and programs of my new school districts, and I distributed this monthly summary for the period of my first 3 months on the new job. On page 101, I have replicated an actual copy of one month's summary that I distributed in one of the four school districts where I served as the superintendent of schools.

The Smile and Frown

A monthly review of observations, thoughts, and experiences of the new kid on the block

PURPOSE: It seems to me that it is wise to share with you the bases I have touched, the people I have met, and the experiences I have had, on a monthly basis, for each of the first three months that I serve in the district. This should provide all board members, administrators, supervisors, teachers, and classified employees some idea of where I am spending my time and the kinds of things I am thinking as I get oriented to the district.

January

2-6:

• Met with Bob _____ for many hours, obtaining a status report on important things that need to be addressed as I take over the reins of the superintendency. Also, I tried to meet as many people in the central office that I was able to locate.

• I met with the central staff for half a day to obtain an overview of their functions and the current needs that I must quickly address.

• Met with many of the district's employees.

• Had an evening meeting with the board officers and with Bob _____ to get an update on things that need to be addressed quickly for board review and actions. Visited two schools.

• Met my commitment to meet with media representatives Don _____, Ellen _____, and Mark _____ to give them an opportunity to interview me as soon as I came on board. Found all to be very pleasant and interested in the school district. Don brought homemade muffins as a nice gesture of welcome.

• Spent one hour answering questions on a radio call-in show.

• Attended a one-half-day meeting with the regional superintendents group and attended the _____ County School Boards' meeting with Board President, Paul _____.

• Spent many hours studying reams of paper prepared by the administrative staff prior to my arrival. Found everyone to be very helpful and willing to put in extra time to help me understand the district, its people, and the items that require my immediate attention.

9-13:

• Met with Peg _____ and asked her to do a study of all committees and support groups that were functioning within the school district, including the people who serve on them; the committees' charges, if any; the origin of each committee; and whether each was ad hoc or permanent in nature.

• Spent three hours meeting with the union leadership of the six unions in the district. Found them willing to be very open, and I learned much important history and current information from them.

• Met with Tom _____ to more clearly understand his functions and to determine the types of evaluation and measurement activities that were under way in the district.

• Met with Todd _____ to discuss the legal complications of our new construction project.

• Attended a board of education hearing and, also, my first official board of education meeting on Monday evening. Introduced a new feature that I hope becomes a part of the regular routine: that of announcing good news about the district, its students, its employees, and its supporters. Discussed the need for the board to set priorities for the work to be done and asked the board members to provide me with their individual goals and desires for the entire year, which I will later convert to outcome objectives to be completed.

• Started my half-day school visitations at 7:30 a.m. at the Alternative School. Was impressed with the dedication of the teachers, the control of the students, and with the fact

that the students volunteered to help serve senior citizens at their annual get-together.

- Attended a luncheon meeting of the area's clergy.
- Had an opportunity to meet the mayor, the chief of police, and the city manager.
- Met with Bev _____ and Norm _____, and expressed my desire to serve as the district's administrative representative to the regional PTA association.
- Met with the central staff and talked about trust problems between the board members and the administration, and decided to try to initiate more open communication by distributing minutes of administrative meetings to all board of education members.
- Met with the Vocational Education Advisory Committee officers and the Director of Vocational and Occupational Education, Jim _____.
- Met with the board of education's officers to plan the next board meeting's agenda.
- Attended a evening meeting of the Community Education Council's meeting at West Ridge.
- Attended the Senior Citizens annual anniversary luncheon at West Ridge Community Center. Kids from the Alternative School were very pleasant with the seniors, and they provided a good image of the school district's students. I welcomed the seniors.
- Visited Central High for one half-day.
- Met with the Director of Special Education to obtain a status overview of the special education operation.
- Met with Elmer _____ to talk about the Quality of Work Life interest he and his corporation expressed.

16-20:

- Visited South Junior High for one half-day.
- Met with the board of education president to finalize the agenda for the upcoming board of education meeting.
- Attended the meeting of the entire Vocational Advisory Council at North High School. Was very impressed that so many people who do not even live in our district serve as helpers in terms of information, suggestions, and processes.

• Met with Duane _____ to obtain an overview of our Continuing Education and Community Schools programs.

• Attended our Intermediate School District's superintendents' meeting. Discussed some of the problems that related to special and vocational education.

• Enjoyed meeting with Mike _____ and all the custodial, maintenance, transportation, and food service directors and employees. I had fun kidding Vince _____ about some of the repair work that had to be done on a job that was completed a couple of months earlier.

• Attended a staff appreciation luncheon at Sleeping Village Elementary School. It was nice that they had prepared a little reception in my honor. It seems like we have a very interested group of citizens; and, hopefully, we can use them to assist us in supporting the positive goals we want to accomplish for the children.

• Visited Barnard Elementary School for one half-day, and I was impressed with the remodeling of the building and the cleanliness level I observed. I was really impressed that the principal had a coffee cup made with my name on it and that she had arranged for the PTA leadership to meet with me.

23-27:

• Met with Greg _____ to review all of the operations and current issues related to personnel matters.

• Attended my second board of education meeting, and I was pleased that the board members, during the meeting, were able to reduce their individually suggested 273 goals to 39; and, finally, to 13 that were to be accomplished during the school year.

General Impressions After My First Month:

1. I am positively impressed with the concern and dedication of the nine board of education members and with the dedication of practically all of the employees to make this school district an excellent one for the children of the district.

2. I am concerned that there is a lack of overall structure and of priorities that will allow us to move forward and quickly improve in those areas that require improvement.

3. I have observed a tremendous amount of excellent teaching going on, and I have generally been impressed by the caring environment I observed in the schools I have visited. I have some concern, however, with the lack of articulation among the elementary and secondary curricula and with employees and students making the best use of instructional time.

4. I am concerned that most of the dialogue of the board of education and administration, at this point in time, is of a negative nature.

5. I am very concerned about the lack of trust and openness of communication between the board and administration, and I intend to do all I can to greatly improve this situation as quickly as possible.

FIRST SIX MONTHS' PLAN

I suggest that the first 6 months be spent getting acquainted, visiting schools and important individuals and groups, absorbing much information about all aspects of the district's operations, and developing an MIS (Management Information System). In addition, I believe this time should be spent developing action plans to achieve the priority goals approved by the board of education and to deal with other high priorities identified by the employees. Add to these other priorities those that I personally want to achieve within my first year as the school district's superintendent.

END OF THE FIRST YEAR'S ASSESSMENT

At the end of the year, the superintendent, staff, and board of education should analyze and evaluate the implications of the data collected from the MIS that has been established. This analysis and evaluation activity should provide clues to what has been done well, and what needs to be further improved, and it can identify voids in the performance of the district that should be addressed in the subsequent year.

SUCCESSFUL HINTS

- It is wise to provide the employees and others in the district with a written *entry plan* if there is any significant time lapse between the time you agree to become an administrator and the time that you will actually appear within the school or school district.
- It is suggested that you develop plans for the first week, the first month, the first 3 months, the first 6 months, and the end of your first year as an administrator in your new school district.
- It would be very helpful if you could develop a written summary of your activities and thoughts during the first 3 months of your tenure in the district. If this written document is distributed to all important parties within the district, it could allay any fears, eliminate rumors, and eliminate any guessing about what you are doing and thinking.
- It is crucial that clear and precise objectives are established and that outcome measures for these objectives are determined.
- It is also crucial that an MIS (Management Information System) be established and that the data collected and analyzed from this system be used to evaluate the levels of achievement on all the important objectives established for the school district and the individual schools within the district.

EXERCISES

Below, write an entry plan letter to be distributed to all employees of your new school or school district. Include in its contents why you took the job, what your interests are, and what you intend to do upon officially beginning your work in the district.

In my first week, I intend to

1.
2.
3.
etc.

During my first month on the job, I intend to

1.
2.
3.
etc.

During my first 3 months on the job, I intend to

1.
2.
3.
etc.

During my first 6 months on the job, I intend to

1.
2.
3.
etc.

At the end of my first year on the job, I will

1.
2.
3.
etc.

During my first month through 3 months in my new administrative position, I intend to clearly communicate with the employees and other important individuals in the school and/or school district by doing the following:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

I will include the following elements in the MIS that I will develop for use in the school district:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
etc.

8

After the Dance, Then What?

Chapter 8 discusses the options that an educational administrator can use after she or he leaves the educational administration position. The chapter covers the following topics: (a) reasons for leaving K-12 educational administration (fired, stressed, desire to change), (b) the trauma of being fired, (c) alternative sources of employment, (d) a university position (professor or administrator), (e) business opportunities (starting your own business, joining a firm as a trainer, working with a consulting firm, other opportunities), (f) consulting work on your own (part- or full-time), (g) realizing that each job category requires a different job search, (h) realizing that each category requires different job application procedures, and (i) realizing that each category requires you to prepare differently for the interview and to conduct yourself differently during the interview. The chapter ends with a series of successful hints, some reflective exercises, and some final words.

REASONS FOR LEAVING K-12 EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

The reasons for leaving educational administration are varied; some are positive experiences, some are frustration creating, and

others are traumatic. If you want to retire early or desire to change your type of employment, the change can be very positive.

If you would like to remain in administration, but you are leaving for health reasons because of the stress you experience when performing your job or you are laid off because the school district has financial difficulties, you can become very frustrated and disillusioned.

If you are fired from your administration job, and you have not immediately obtained another position, it can be a very traumatic situation. If you are married and have a family, your firing and lack of employment no doubt also will be a very traumatic experience for your spouse and family.

Assuming that you do not want to return to a position as an educational administrator, or that you cannot obtain another job as an administrator, you can explore a variety of alternatives. The main possibilities will probably include (a) a university professorship, (b) a variety of business opportunities, or (c) consulting work.

At this juncture, I return to the special hurts and the planning that is required for a fired administrator and her or his family to survive this traumatic and highly emotional event. After dealing with the termination situation, I will turn to brief discussions of the various job options available to an administrator who has left educational administration for any of a variety of reasons.

THE TRAUMA OF LOSING YOUR JOB BY BEING FIRED

If you find yourself experiencing serious problems communicating with your immediate supervisor, or with your board of education if you are a superintendent, you should consider the immediate possibility of your being fired.

If you are fired, you and your family members should develop immediate plans to preserve your (a) financial, (b) physical, and (c) psychological stability. This is important as it may take 1 or 2 years before you are able to attain any type of new employment. Here are some hints to assist you in dealing with this traumatic situation.

First, you must realize that there is a sequence of feelings that you and your family members are going to have to live through. The sequence of this process includes the following steps.

First, you become angry. You have great difficulty understanding how this could happen to you after all the contributions you have made to the school district. You will get extremely angry, and you initially may want to get even with whomever was responsible for your firing.

Second, you tend to deny the reality of it all. Somehow you believe that you can convince your administrative supervisor or the board of education members to change their minds and keep you on. You also may think that you can gather enough employee and community support to generate a sufficient degree of pressure to cause whomever was responsible for your firing to change her or his (or their) minds.

Third, you begin to feel a sense of uncertainty. You are uncertain why this happened, you feel uncertain about your personal worth, and you feel uncertain about your ability to obtain another job.

Fourth, you accept the reality of your being fired. This is the first big step you will be taking in the healing process.

Fifth, you will began an active search for another administrative position or for an alternative source of employment. This will take a great deal of planning, and it usually will take a rather lengthy period of time.

Finally, you will obtain a new job. If you and your family have remained strong throughout this trying period, you will be well on your way to beginning a new, happy, and productive life.

To arrive at this desirable final result, however, you must seriously and quickly attend to the financial, physical, and psychological adjustments that have to be made by you and your family members.

Financial preparations will include two major activities. You must immediately get your financial house in order, and you must project the minimum financial needs of your family until you become reemployed.

Physical preparations must be pursued. The best way to handle the stress of a situation such as a firing is to make certain that you and your family members get themselves into the best physical

condition possible. After a doctor's physical exam, begin an energetic exercise program. In addition, eliminate smoking and an overreliance on liquor or caffeine, and, if you are overweight, trim down to a reasonable weight.

Emotional stability must be maintained. Seek out support groups of individuals and families that are going through the same situation that you and your family are experiencing. Also, join church groups or any other low-cost support groups that will help you get through this traumatic period.

ALTERNATIVE JOB SOURCES

If you handled the steps of the process outlined above, you can energetically and positively pursue alternative positions by setting some parameters for your activities. Those that I suggest are to (a) establish the widest variety of jobs that you'll consider and the broadest geographic area in which you'll accept employment, (b) create numerous networks of contacts to assist you in obtaining a variety of jobs, (c) consider taking a temporary or a part-time job as a *cover,* as it easier to obtain another position if you can honestly state that you currently are employed, and (d) develop a very strong marketing strategy for yourself and follow through with that strategy daily.

Now we can briefly turn to the advantages and disadvantages of alternative sources of employment.

A UNIVERSITY POSITION (PROFESSOR OR ADMINISTRATOR)

A university professorship usually has the advantage of being an honored occupation. If you obtain a professorial position in the field of educational administration, it will also provide you with positive contact with others and it will allow you to use the knowledge you have gained as an administrator.

The disadvantages of a college or university professorship include the following: (a) It usually will pay much less than the salary you received as an administrator; (b) you will have very little

chance of being hired if you do not possess a doctoral degree; and (c) you will have very little chance of being hired if you have not established a record of publications.

If you are interested in obtaining a university administrative position as a dean of a college, you will go through a similar process. However, the search committee will probably include other deans and central office administrators as well as representative professors. The final decision, however, will usually be made by the university provost and/or the university president.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The wide variety of alternative job opportunities that can be pursued will vary with each person's interests, skills, experiences, financial condition, and financial demands. A good source of a wide variety of helpful information for you to obtain when searching for a new field of work is the publication titled the *National Business Employment Weekly.*

Whichever alternate field of employment you intend to consider, the first step is that of making a systematic inventory of your knowledge, experience, and skills and identifying those fields of work where your experiences, skills, and knowledge will carry over into new potential employment positions. You may possibly be interested in joining a consulting firm or in starting your own consulting business or you may wish to explore other job categories.

If you were fired from your last position, it is important to avoid discussing your previous employer in a negative manner. Displaying an embittered emotional state will definitely be a deterrent as you talk to possible future employers.

CONSULTING WORK ON YOUR OWN (PART-TIME OR FULL-TIME)

Consulting work will allow you to use your background training as a manager and as an educator. Often businesses and consulting firms like to hire educators as trainers.

If you intend to organize your own consulting firm, you have to seriously consider the start-up equipment and marketing costs,

and you have to honestly predict the number of immediate clients you can attract. If you cannot afford the start-up expenses, if you cannot live on a meager amount of earnings as you build your business, and if you do not have a ready-made source of clients, you probably should not attempt to start your own consulting firm.

AN EXAMPLE OF AN ALTERNATIVE JOB OPPORTUNITY

Assuming that you are attempting to obtain a position as a planner with a business organization, you will have to develop a short résumé that quickly outlines the strengths you have to offer any future potential employer. A single-page résumé that would describe me if I were interested in applying for a planning position would be similar to the example presented below.

RÉSUMÉ

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

JOB OBJECTIVE: to assist an organization in developing creative solutions to the planning, organizing, monitoring, and controlling functions while working within a successful firm.

EDUCATION:

Ph.D. University of Michigan

M.B.A. University of California

B.S. University of Connecticut, major in business management and planning

SIGNIFICANT RELATED EXPERIENCES:

I have successful experience as a middle manager and 20 years' experience as a CEO of a large educational organization that employed over 3,000 persons and had an operating budget in excess of $100 million.

I have taught graduate courses in planning and management for four universities.

I have done consulting in the areas of planning and management with numerous business, educational, and professional associations (list is available for review).

In the area of planning and organizing, I have consulted in the areas of strategic and tactical planning, functional analyses, organizational outcome efficiencies, trend analyses, needs assessments, and systems model development.

In the area of organizing, I have consulted in the fields of functional analyses, policy development and analysis, compensation reviews, and organizational structure analyses.

In the areas of monitoring and controlling, I have developed performance review systems, and I written two books on the evaluation of processes and on the evaluation of product superiority. I have also published extensively in management journals on a wide variety of management and planning topics (list is available for review).

Finally, I have made hundreds of presentations to individual organizations and to many regional and national groups (list available for review).

REALIZING THAT EACH JOB CATEGORY REQUIRES A DIFFERENT JOB SEARCH

It is important to identify and tap into the networks that can assist you in locating the type of jobs you desire. These networks differ for each job category in which you are interested.

REALIZING THAT EACH CATEGORY REQUIRES A DIFFERENT JOB APPLICATION PROCEDURE

In addition to identifying the specific networks into which you must tap, depending on the specific job category in which you have an interest, each category of job will also require you to plan your job search strategies differently. If you are trying to locate a job in business or industry, you may very well talk only to a personnel manager or to another *individual* who will have final decision-making power regarding who is to be employed. However, if you are applying for a college or university professorship, you will be screened and interviewed by a *group* of individuals who currently are university professors, many of whom have never had management experience or hired anyone before the current search.

In addition, most businesses want a very brief résumé submitted, and the most effective way to conduct yourself during an interview is to be an exceptionally good listener. On the other hand, a university will expect you to submit a comprehensive résumé that lists all of your prior positions, all college courses you have taught, all articles and books you have written, all professional honors you have received, and all presentations you have made at professional conferences.

PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCT DURING THE INTERVIEW

In preparation for any interview situation, you must find out as much as you can about the organization before appearing on site; you should discover who will be conducting the interview and what characteristics they desire in the person they are prepared to hire. If you are called into a business organization for an interview, you will probably only be interviewed by a single interviewer who is empowered to make hiring decisions. Generally, the best approach to a business interview is to spend much time listening and to answer the specific questions that the interviewer wants addressed. Your responses should be highly focused, and they should be as short and to the point as possible. In addition, you must try to determine how decisions are made in that organization as well as being a careful observer of the interviewer's vocal tones and nonverbal behaviors throughout the interview process.

At a university, your interview will differ significantly, and it will often consist of your providing a presentation to the interview committee about your research interests and then spending much time meeting with the committees and various other people who will ask you a wide variety of questions. The interview process will vary in length from 1 to 3 days.

SUCCESSFUL HINTS

- If you are fired, realize that you will go through a series of stages to heal yourself.
- If you are fired, you and your family should immediately develop a plan that will assist each of you to maintain your financial, physical, and emotional health.
- If you are looking for a change of type of employment, you must create different networks, prepare differently for the application, prepare differently for the interview, and develop a separate marketing plan for each category of position that may offer you a future employment opportunity.

EXERCISES

If I am relived of my current administrative position for any reason; I (and my wife and family, if applicable) will make the following categorical adjustments to maintain my (our) financial, physical, and emotional health until I am again gainfully employed.

Financial:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Physical:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Emotional:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Once I leave the profession, I believe I have the knowledge and skills to allow me to obtain a position in the following areas:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

FINAL WORDS

Now that you have read this book completely, I suggest you do two things to further assist you in preparing for your job search. First, look at Appendix A, which presents a graphic model of the steps involved in a successful job search, and, second, complete Appendix B, which provides you with a set of reflective job search exercise worksheets designed to ensure that you have completed the planning that is so necessary to obtaining an educational administrator's position and becoming a successful administrator.

Appendix A: Job Search Model

Step 1:

- Analyze strengths
- Develop credentials
- Develop vita
- Obtain references

Step 2:

- Locate publications
- Contact headhunters
- Contact professors
- Contact colleagues
- Contact placement office
- Determine job "fit"

Step 3:

- Develop strategy book
- Develop application

Step 4:

- Prepare for interview
- Do mock sessions
- Collect background information
- Visit district in advance
- Attend to conduct at the interview
- Follow through after

Step 5:

- Negotiate duties
- Negotiate salary
- Negotiate fringes
- Negotiate length of work year
- Negotiate contract length

Step 6:

- Perform well currently
- Hitch yourself to a rising star
- Make yourself visible
- Establish networks
- Develop key communicators

Step 7:

- Develop job entry plan

Step 8 (optional):

- Exit administration
- Explore alternate job options

Appendix B: Reflective Job Search Exercise Worksheets

Directions: If you wish to improve your skills in conducting a professional, effective, and efficient educational administration job search, complete the following self-help exercises. I suggest that you buy a three-ring notebook, label dividers for each section, and put the exercises on separate pages within each appropriate section.

CHAPTER 1 EXERCISES

Develop your strengths analysis by listing each strength you possess within the categories below. Next, prioritize the skills in each category from your strongest to your least strong. Finally, determine which ones you wish to emphasize for the specific administrative position for which you intend to apply.

Knowledge I possess:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Training and professional activities I've completed:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Experiences I have had:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Technical skills I possess:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

People skills I possess:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Make a list of potential positive reference sources, using the categories listed below. Remember to ask their permission to use them for references and then ask them to write a reference letter for your placement file. Also, ask permission to provide their addresses and phone numbers to prospective employers.

Administrators for whom I have worked:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Well-known professors of educational leadership:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

State and national professional association leaders:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Other highly visible and helpful reference persons:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Many times members of consulting firms can be very helpful to you if they are acquainted with your desired positions and your strengths. List the consulting firms that you should contact.

Consulting firm executives whom I should contact:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Develop an outstanding vita (résumé) that will put your best image forward to potential employers. Use the basic structural categories listed below to get you started.

Education:

Certifications:

Experiences:

Leadership positions:

Honors:

Other items that will make me stand out from the crowd:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

CHAPTER 2 EXERCISES

List the sources that you feel you can call upon to assist you in locating educational administration vacancies in which you may be interested. Use the three categories of print sources, organizations, and people assistors.

Print job sources:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Place sources (organizations):

1.
2.
3.
etc.

People sources:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List each job for which you are considering applying and make two matrices comparing (a) your needs with the school district's desires and (b) your strengths with the school district's desires. Weight the items, with "10" being the best fit and "0" being no fit.

My needs compared with the district's desires:

My needs	Points	District's desires
1.		1.
2.		2.
3.		3.
etc.		etc.

My strengths compared with the district's desires:

My strengths	Points	District's desires
1.		1.
2.		2.
3.		3.
etc.		etc.

CHAPTER 3 EXERCISES

If you have not yet developed one, please do some reflective thinking and develop your Job Strategy Book now. I suggest that you use a three-ring notebook that is subdivided into a series of separate, clearly marked sections. Use the following outline to develop your Job Strategy Book.

MY JOB STRATEGY BOOK

My knowledge base for these jobs:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

My experiences that relate to these jobs:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

My technical skills that relate to these jobs:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

My people skills that relate to these jobs:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

My needs:

Financial

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Geographic

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Cultural

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Other needs

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Sources of information about educational administration job vacancies:

Print sources (titles and access information)

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Organizational sources (titles, addresses, phone numbers)

1.
2.
3.
etc.

People sources (names, titles, addresses, phone numbers)

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Persons who have agreed to write recommendations (names, titles, addresses, phone numbers):

1.
2.
3.
etc.

My *living* résumé (keep updated):

My letters of application:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Jobs for which I have applied (name, location, contact person):

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Jobs for which I have had interviews (name, location, and contact person):

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Analysis of school districts (schools) in which I have had an interview:

Potential interview questions:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Questions that I have been actually been asked during my job interviews (separated by each job):

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Helpful books and articles:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Other information that I feel is important for me to retain:

It is important to keep the information updated as you continue your job search. It is also helpful to retain your Job Strategy Book after you have accepted the educational administration position you desired, as it will serve as a useful source of information in the future when you are interested in changing administrative positions.

Write your letter of application below, and remember to refer specifically to the desires of the school district that are listed in the district's vacancy announcement. You may wish to write two or three different letters of application and then choose the one that you feel best fits the specific administrative position for which you are applying.

Remember, your letter of application and the résumé you enclose with it provide the only information that the employer has at this time. Somehow this has to impress the reviewer sufficiently to allow you to get to the next step—a personal interview.

CHAPTER 4 EXERCISES

If you complete the following reflective exercises, you will make certain that you have not missed any important preparation points.

1. I have located and used the following sources of information:

a. University professors

(1)
(2)
(3)
etc.

b. My university placement offices

(1)
(2)
etc.

c. Professional consulting firms

(1)
(2)
etc.

2. I might face the following types of interview situations:

a.
b.
c.
etc.

3. The following friends and/or colleagues would be willing to assist me in my interview preparation by presenting me with mock interview situations in which they will interrogate me with the most difficult and most comprehensive set of questions:

a.
b.
c.
etc.

4. I have decided to go incognito prior to my scheduled interview date and visit the following places, and talk to the following categories of people, to obtain their perceptions of the quality of the schools and school districts.

a.
b.
c.
etc.

5. During my interview, I am determined to do and display the following activities and characteristics:

a.
b.
c.
etc.

6. After I have completed my interview and returned home, I will do the following:

a.
b.
c.
etc.

CHAPTER 5 EXERCISES

List those CSFs (Critical Success Factors) below that you believe should be included in your job description and that will be used to evaluate your administrative performance.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Assuming that you have been offered the position of the superintendent of schools in a school district, what specific very important provisions would you want included in your contract? List them below:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Considering your personal ability and confidence level, would you intend to negotiate your employment contract or would you hire an attorney to negotiate it for you? If you would hire an attorney to negotiate it, what do you perceive to be the advantages and/or disadvantages of using this approach to your contract negotiation? List them below.

Advantages:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Disadvantages:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

CHAPTER 6 EXERCISES

List the potential networks that you can tap into or create to assist you in your administrative job search.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List those specific individuals that might be helpful to you in creating a key communicators network.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List those star administrators with whom you may have a chance to work or who will agree to serve as mentors for you.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List those conferences and/or workshops that may be helpful for you to attend.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List those professional conferences and/or workshops at which you may be able to present a program.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

List the titles of some journals in which you may be able to become a published author and list the titles of articles you may feel competent to write. If you feel you can successfully write books, list the potential publishers and the potential topics for your books.

1.
2.
3.
etc.

CHAPTER 7 EXERCISES

Below, write an entry plan letter to be distributed to all employees of your new school or school district. Include in its contents why you took the job, what your interests are, and what you intend to do upon officially beginning your work in the district.

In my first week, I intend to

1.
2.
3.
etc.

During my first month on the job, I intend to

1.
2.
3.
etc.

During my first 3 months on the job, I intend to

1.
2.
3.
etc.

During my first 6 months on the job, I intend to

1.
2.
3.
etc.

At the end of my first year on the job, I will

1.
2.
3.

During my first month through 3 months in my new administrative position, I intend to clearly communicate with the employees and other important individuals in the school and/or school district by doing the following:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

I will include the following elements in the MIS (Management Information System) I will develop for use in the school district:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
etc.

CHAPTER 8 EXERCISES

If I am relieved of my current administrative position for any reason; I (and my wife and family, if applicable) will make the following categorical adjustments to maintain my (our) financial, physical, and emotional health until I am again gainfully employed:

Financial:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Physical:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Emotional:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Once I leave the profession, I believe I have the knowledge and skills to allow me to obtain a position in the following areas:

1.
2.
3.
etc.

Suggested Readings

Allan, P. (1990). Looking for work after forty: Job search experiences of older unemployed managers and professionals. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 27*(3), 113-121.

This article describe the job search experiences of 348 previously unemployed managers and professionals over age 40. Recommendations are provided based upon the experiences of these individuals.

Black, J. A., & Fenwick, W. E. (1986). *What they don't tell you in schools of education about school administration* (pp. 109-129). Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

This book contains two helpful chapters dealing with the topics of career planning, résumés, headhunters, and interviewing.

Boles, R. N. (1993). *What color is your parachute?* Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed.

An excellent overall guide for anyone involved in job hunting or thinking of changing careers.

Davis, B. I., & Brown, G. (1992). Your interview image. *The Executive Educator, 14*(6), 22-23.

The authors stress a series of strategies to assist a candidate in conducting a successful interview that will provide an edge over other administrator job candidates.

Gibson, K. J., Zerbe, W. J., & Franken, R. E. (1992). Job search strategies for older job hunters: Addressing employers' perceptions. *Canadian Journal of Counselling, 26*(3), 166-176.

This research study analyzes responses from 651 employers to the question: "What is the major reason why the mature unemployed so often have difficulty finding work?"

Grier, T. B., & Trenta, L. (1992). Landing the big one. *The Executive Educator, 14*(6), 20-22.

A superintendent and an executive assistant share the following suggestions when looking for an administrative position: (a) know the setting, (b) practice interviewing, (c) prepare a concise portfolio, (d) end on a strong note, and (e) show your appreciation for the interview.

Hellwig, H. H. (1992). Job interviewing: Process and practice. *The Bulletin* (Association for Business Communication), *55*(2), 8-14.

This article discusses the topics of résumés, job application letters, preparing for the interview, doing the interview, and leaving the interview.

Herman, J. J. (1985). You're fired! You can survive the blow by starting your training now. *The Executive Educator, 7*(3), 23-24, 35.

Specific suggestions are provided to cope with the trauma of being fired from one's administrative position.

Herman, J. J. (1989). Craft a canny strategy in your battle for the superintendency. *The Executive Educator, 11*(7), 16-17, 31.

This article provides a series of successful hints to the person wishing to obtain a superintendency.

Herman, J. J., & Heller, R. W. (1986). Avoid a belly flop when you dive into that new job. *The Executive Educator, 8*(6), 17-19.

This article discusses suggestions for actions that will prove helpful to an administrator when a new administrative position is accepted.

Herman, J. J., & Heller, R. W. (1986). How to, step by step land that first superintendency. *The Executive Educator, 8*(1), 24-25, 39.

Although this article is specifically directed to obtaining a first superintendency, it has valuable suggestions for all persons attempting to obtain an administrative position.

Herman, J. J., & Heller, R. W. (1986). Stop the superintendent search until you answer these key questions. *The American School Board Journal, 173*(2), 29-30.

This article provides a series of considerations that school boards should reflect upon before they enter a search process for a new superintendent for their school district.

Herman, J. L., & Herman, J. J. (1993). A principal's guide to job hunting. *Here's How* (National Association of Elementary School Principals), *11*(5), 1-4.

A brief, stand-alone publication that provides a series of suggestions for those individuals who are interested in obtaining their first principalship or who are interested in obtaining a different principal position.

Konnert, M. W., & Augenstein, J. J. (1990). *The superintendency in the nineties: What superintendents and board members need to know* (pp. 187-212). Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

This book has three helpful chapters dealing with (a) preparation for and initiation into a superintendency, (b) obtaining a superintendency, and (c) after the superintendency.

Maddox, R. B. (1988). *Quality interviewing.* Los Altos, CA: Crisp.

This short, easy-to-read book is designed to assist those who will interview candidates, but it provides much helpful information that will assist the administrative candidate in learning the information provided to those who will interview them.

Staff. (1983a, October 15). Job bulletin. *Leadership News,* p. 6.

Staff. (1983b, October 27). The marketplace. *Education Week,* p. 27.

Wells, B., & Spinks, N. (1992). Interviewing: What small companies say. *The Bulletin* (Association for Business Communication), *55*(2), 18-22.

Reports the responses to a research survey instrument soliciting opinions on those factors considered important by a sample of chief executive officers in small, privately held companies.

Designing Your Own Career

A Job-Hunting Guide for Administrators (and Would-Be Administrators)

Jerry J. Herman
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

Whether you're an aspiring administrator, dissatisfied with your present position, or just ready for a change, Jerry Herman has some important advice for you. It's advice that will give your career a jump-start and put you back in control of your future.

Jerry Herman developed *Designing Your Own Career* using more than 35 years of personal experience at all levels of educational administration in some of the best schools and districts in America. He knows how to sell himself, and he'll share his hard-won secrets with you!

In this unique job-hunting guide are crucial tips and inside information on how to...

- Locate just the right job for you
- Prepare a winning profile of yourself
- "Put your best foot forward" in a letter of application
- Secure that all-important interview
- Conduct yourself and follow through like a *professional*
- Negotiate your employment conditions
- Develop a timetable of goals to achieve in your first year
- Create a plan that gets you to your *next* position

Some administrators choose career paths that lead them to alternative occupations, such as university positions, consulting, or other business opportunities. Herman shows you how to use your valuable experience to succeed in a new career. He covers all the options and explains how researching, applying for, and interviewing for positions like these vary significantly from job-hunting for administrative positions.

Designing Your Own Career is full of real-world examples, sample vitas, letters of application, and more. Herman explains in detail what to expect from various scenarios and includes practical exercises to help you *be prepared*. It's your key to getting where you want to be — and getting there faster than you ever thought possible.

Created especially for today's success-oriented administrators, *Designing Your Own Career* shows you how to make the most of your strengths and experience. Other books can help you do your job better. *This book helps you get a better job.*

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